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PRACTICAL AND INTERNAL EVIDENCE

AGAINST

CATHOLICISM,

WITH

OCCASIONAL STRICTURES ON MR. BUTLER'S BOOK OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH:

IN SIX LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO THE IMPARTIAL

AMONG THE

ROMAN CATHOLICS

OF

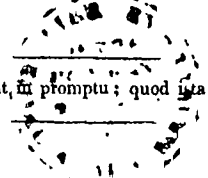
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

110887
CC

BY THE

REV. JOSEPH BLANCO WHITE, M.A. B.D.

In the University of Seville; Licentiate of Divinity in the University of Osuna, formerly Chaplain Magistral (Preacher) to the King of Spain, in the Royal Chapel at Seville; Fellow, and once Rector, of the College of St. Mary a Jesu of the same town; Synodal Examiner of the Diocese of Cadiz; Member of the Royal Academy of Belles-Lettres, of Seville, &c. &c.; now a Clergyman of the Church of England:—Author of Doblado's Letters from Spain.



En dicam, quæ mihi sunt, in promptu; quod ipsa de re multum... et diu cogitavi. CICERO.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

MDCCCXXV.

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LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

TO THE

REV. EDWARD COPLESTON, D.D.

PROVOST OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD; PREBENDARY OF ROCHESTER, &c. &c. &c.

MY DEAR SIR,

You have allowed me to inscribe this work to you, and I feel proud thus to associate it with your name before the public.

As the subject, however, on which I have ventured, is one which violently agitates men's minds at this moment, it would be

selfish and ungrateful in me, if, while I enjoyed the benefit of an implied approbation from an authority so highly and so deservedly respected, I were not as anxious to save you from misrepresentation, as I am with regard to myself. To conceal that, upon the view of part of my manuscript, you have, with the greatest kindness, encouraged me to proceed; would require a degree of self-denial at which I shall never aim. But the hurry in which, from the pressure of other literary engagements, I have been obliged to prepare the ensuing pages, prevented my having the same advantage for the whole of the work; and that circumstance mars the pleasure which I should have derived from your complete sanction.

Disappointed of that satisfaction, I am happy that another is left me in the similarity of our views, as to what is called the *Catholic Question.* From the friendly intercourse with which you have honoured me, I know that you hold it wrong to put down religious error by force, or to propagate religious truth by degrading and branding those who do not think with us.—I have suffered too much from religious despotism, not fully and cordially to hold the same doctrine. The fetters which, by God's mercy, I have been enabled to break, I would rather die than help to rivet upon a fellow-Christian: but the Power which made me groan in protracted bondage, is striving to obtain a direct influence in this Government; and I cannot regard such

efforts with apathy. For myself—thanks to the generous country which has adopted me—I have nothing to fear; but I deem it a debt of gratitude to volunteer my testimony in the great pending cause, that it may be weighed against the studied and coloured evidence of such writers, as would disguise the true character of the spiritual tyranny, whose fierce grasp I have eluded. Indeed I would never have shown myself in the field of controversy, but for the appearance of a book evidently intended to divert the public from the important, and, to me, indubitable fact, that *sincere* Roman Catholics cannot conscientiously be *tolerant*. How far, my dear Sir, you are convinced of this, I cannot take upon myself to say; but I am sure you will allow, that if such be

the real character of Catholicism, the only security of *Toleration* must be a certain degree of intolerance, in regard to its enemies; as prisons in the freest governments are necessary for the preservation of freedom.

I have thus far thought it necessary to touch upon the political question with which my work is indirectly connected. I say *indirectly*, because the parliamentary question about the claims of the Roman Catholics is by no means the object which I have had in view while writing. I will not deny that I should be glad if my humble performance could throw any light on a question in which the welfare of this country is so deeply concerned; but it is probable that it will not appear till after the decision of Parliament. Let this, however, be as it

may, still I humbly hope that, whether the Roman Catholics are admitted into Parliament, or allowed to continue under the disabilities which their honest opponents lament, my labour will not have been thrown away. For as the danger which may threaten this country in the admission of Roman Catholic legislators, depends entirely upon their religious sincerity; I shall not have troubled the public in vain if, either I can convince the *conscientious* of the papal communion, that a Roman Catholic cannot honestly do his duty as a member of the British Parliament without moral guilt; or, what I ardently wish, my arguments should open their eyes to the errors of their church.

A work written with these views cannot, I trust, however imperfect in the execution, be an unworthy testimony of the great respect with which I am,

My dear sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JOSEPH BLANCO WHITE.

Chelsea, April 30, 1825.

CONTENTS.

LETTER I.

Page

The Author's account of himself

LETTER II.

Real and practical extent of the authority of the Pope, according to the Roman Catholic Faith. Intolerance, its natural consequence 29

LETTER III.

Examination of the title to infallibility, spiritual supremacy, and exclusive salvation, claimed by the Roman Catholic Church. Internal evidence against Rome, in the use she has made of her assumed prerogative. Short method of determining the question 70

LETTER IV.

A specimen of the unity exhibited by Rome. Roman Catholic distinction between *infallibility* in doctrine and liability to misconduct. Consequences of this distinction. Roman Catholic unity and invariableness of Faith, a delusion. Scriptural unity of Faith . 93

LETTER V.

Moral character of the Roman Church. Celibacy. Nunneries 115

Page

LETTER VI.

Rome the enemy of mental improvement: the direct tendency of her Prayer-book, the Breviary, to cherish credulity and adulterate Christian virtue . . 144

PRACTICAL AND INTERNAL

EVIDENCE

AGAINST

CATHOLICISM,

ETC.

LETTER I.

The Author's account of himself.

If a man be at any time excusable in speaking of himself, it must be when he finds it necessary to address those to whom he is unknown. The name and designation of a writer are, indeed, sufficient in most cases, and even unnecessary in some, for the purposes to which the press is commonly made an instrument; but the occasion of this address requires a more intimate acquaintance with my personal circumstances.

Before I proceed, however, I beg you to observe the word *impartial*, by which I have qualified *Roman Catholics*.—From such Roman Catholics

as renounce their intellectual rights, and leave the trouble of thinking to others, I cannot expect a hearing. To the professed champions, in whom the mere name of discussion kindles the keen spirit of controversy, I can say nothing which they are not predetermined to find groundless and futile. Among those who, bound to Catholicism by the ties of blood and friendship, make consistency in religious profession a point of honour, I am prepared to meet only with disdain. But there must be not a few, in whom the prepossessions of education and parentage have failed to smother a natural passion for truth, which all the witchery of kindred, wealth, and honour, cannot allure from its object: To such, among the British and Irish Roman Catholics, I direct these letters; for, though the final result of their religious inquiries may be diametrically opposite to that which has separated me from my country, my kindred, my honours, emoluments, and prospects; I trust that in the following account of myself they will readily recognise an intellectual temper, for which no difference of opinion can prevent their feeling some sympathy.

I am descended from an Irish family, whose

attachment to the Roman Catholic religion was often proved by their endurance of the persecution which, for a long period, afflicted the members of their persuasion in Ireland. My grandfather was the eldest of three brothers, whose voluntary banishment from their native land, rooted out my family from the county of Waterford. A considerable fortune enabled my ancestor to settle at Seville, where he was inscribed on the roll of the privileged gentry, and carried on extensive business as a merchant. But the love of his native land could not be impaired by his foreign residence; and as his eldest son (my father) could not but grow attached to Spain, by reason of his birth, he sent him in his childhood to Ireland, that he might also cling to that country by early feelings of kindness. It was thus that my father combined in his person the two most powerful and genuine elements of a religionist—the unhesitating faith of persecuting Spain; the impassioned belief of persecuted Ireland.

My father was the first of his kindred that married into a Spanish family; and his early habits of exalted piety made him choose a wife whom

few can equal in religious sincerity. I have hallowed the pages of another work * with the character of my parents: yet affection would readily furnish me with new portraits, were I not anxious to get over this preliminary egotism. It is enough to say that such were the purity, the benevolence, the angelic piety of my father's life, that, at his death, multitudes of people thronged the house to indulge a last view of the dead body. Nor was the wife of his bosom at all behind him, either in fulness of faith or sanctity of manners. The endeavours of such parents to bring up their children in conformity with their religious notions may, therefore, be fully conceived without the help of description.

No waywardness of disposition appeared in me to defeat or obstruct their labours. At the age of fourteen all the seeds of devotion, which had been assiduously sown in my heart, sprung up as it were spontaneously. The pious practices, which had hitherto been a task, were now the effect of my own choice. I became a constant attendant at the Congregation of the Oratory, where pious

* Letters from Spain, by Don Leucadio Doblado.

young men, intended for the Church, generally had their spiritual directors. Dividing my time between study and devotion, I went through a course of philosophy and divinity at the University of Seville; at the end of which I received the Roman Catholic order of sub-deacon. By that time I had obtained the degrees of Master of Arts and Bachelor of Divinity. Being elected a Fellow of the College of St. Mary *a Jesu* of Seville, when I was not of sufficient standing for the superior degree of Licentiate of Divinity *, which the Fellowship required, I took that degree at Osuna, where the statutes demand no interval between these academical honours. A year had scarcely elapsed since I had received priest's orders, when, after a public examination, in competition with other candidates, I obtained the stall of *Magistral* or Preacher, in the chapter of king's chaplains, at Seville. Placed, so young, in a situation which my predecessor had obtained

* Previous to the degree of Doctor of Divinity a severe examination takes place, which gives to the *Licentiate* all the rights, though not the honours of Doctorship. These may be obtained by a *Licentiate*, at any time, by the payment of some fees.

after many years' service as a vicar, in the same town, I conceived myself bound to devote my whole leisure to the study of religion. I need not say that I was fully conversant with the system of Catholic divinity; for I owed my preferment to a public display of theological knowledge: yet I wished to become acquainted with all kinds of works which might increase and perfect that knowledge.

My religious belief had hitherto been undisturbed: but light clouds of doubt began now to pass over my mind, which the warmth of devotion soon dissipated. Yet they would gather again and again, with an increased darkness, which prayer could scarcely dispel.—That immorality and levity are *always* the source of unbelief, the experience of my own case, and my intimate acquaintance with many others, enable me most positively to deny. As to myself, I declare most solemnly that my rejection of Christianity took place at a period when my conscience could not reproach me with any open breach of duty, but those committed several years before: that during the transition from religious belief to incredulity, the horror of sins against the

faith, deeply implanted by education in my soul, haunted me night and day; and that I exerted all the powers of my mind to counteract the involuntary doubts which were daily acquiring an irresistible strength. In this distress I brought to remembrance all the arguments for the truth of the Christian religion, which I had studied in the French apologists. I read other works of the same kind; and having to preach, in the execution of my office, to the royal brigade of carabineers, who came to worship the body of Saint Ferdinand preserved in the king's chapel, I chose the subject of infidelity, on which I delivered an elaborate discourse *. But the fatal crisis was at hand. At the end of a year from the preaching of this sermon—the confession is painful, indeed, yet due to religion itself—I was bordering on atheism.

If my case were singular, if my knowledge of the most enlightened classes of Spain did not furnish me with a multitude of sudden transitions from sincere faith and piety to the most outrageous infidelity, I would submit to the humbling con-

* This sermon was published at Seville, at the expense of the brigade.

viction, that either weakness of judgment or fickleness of character, had been the only source of my errors. But though I am not at liberty to mention individual cases, I do attest, from the most certain knowledge, that the history of my own mind is, with little variation, that of a great portion of the Spanish clergy. The fact is certain: I make no individual charge: every one who comes within this general description may still wear the mask, which no Spaniard can throw off without bidding an eternal farewell to his country.

Now, let us pause to examine this moral phenomenon: and, since I am one of the class which exhibits it, I will proceed with the moral dissection of myself, however unpleasant the task may be. Many, indeed, will dismiss the case with the trite observation that extremes generally produce their opposites. But an *impartial* mind will not turn to a common-place evasion, to save itself the labour of thinking.

When I examine the state of my mind previous to my rejecting the Christian faith, I cannot recollect any thing in it but what is in perfect accordance with that form of religion in which I was

educated. I revered the Scriptures as the word of God; but was also persuaded that without a living, infallible interpreter, the Bible was a dead letter, which could not convey its meaning with any certainty. I grounded, therefore, my Christian faith upon the infallibility of the church. No Roman Catholic pretends to a better foundation. "I believe whatever the holy mother church holds and believes," is the compendious creed of every member of the Roman communion. Had my doubts affected any particular doctrine, I should have clung to the decisions of a church which claims exemption from error; but my first doubts attacked the very basis of Catholicism. I believe that the reasoning which shook my faith is not new in the vast field of theological controversy. But I protest that, if such be the case, the coincidence adds weight to the argument, for I am perfectly certain that it was the spontaneous suggestion of my own mind. I thought within myself that the certainty of the Roman Catholic faith had no better ground than a fallacy of that kind which is called reasoning in a circle; for I believed the infallibility of the church because the Scripture said she was

infallible; while I had no better proof that the Scripture said so, than the assertion of the church, that she could not mistake the Scripture. In vain did I endeavour to evade the force of this argument; indeed I still believe it unanswerable. Was, then, Christianity nothing but a groundless fabric, the world supported by the elephant, the elephant standing on the tortoise? Such was the conclusion to which I was led by a system which impresses the mind with the obscurity and insufficiency of the written word of God. Why should I consult the Scriptures? My only choice was between revelation explained by the church of Rome, and no revelation. Catholics who live in Protestant countries may, in spite of the direct tendency of their system, practically perceive the unreal nature of this dilemma. But wherever the religion of Rome reigns absolute, there is but one step between it and infidelity.

To describe the state of my feelings, when, believing religion a fable, I still found myself compelled daily to act as a minister and promoter of imposture, is certainly beyond my powers. An ardent wish seized me to fly from a country where

the law left me no choice between death and hypocrisy. But my flight would have brought my parents with sorrow to the grave; and I thank God that he gave me a heart which, though long "without law," was often, as in this case, a "law to myself." Ten years, the best of my life, were passed in this unsufferable state, when the approach of Buonaparte's troops to Seville enabled me to quit Spain, without exciting suspicion as to the real motive which tore me for ever from every thing I loved. I was too well aware of the firmness of my resolution, not to endure the most agonizing pain when I irrevocably crossed the threshold of my father's house, and when his bending figure disappeared from my eyes, at the first winding of the Guadalquivir, down which I sailed. Heaven knows that time has not had power to heal the wounds which this separation inflicted on my heart; but, such was the misery of my mental slavery, that not a shadow of regret for my determination to expatriate myself, has ever exasperated the evils inseparable from the violent step by which I obtained my freedom.

Having described the fatal effects of Catholicism

on my mind, I will, with equal candour, relate the changes operated upon it by my residence in England.

It was the general opinion in Spain, that Protestants, though often adorned with *moral* virtues, were totally deficient in true religious feelings. This was the opinion of Spanish Catholics. Spanish unbelievers, like myself, were most firmly convinced that men, *enlightened* as the English, could only regard religion as a political engine. Our greater acquaintance with French books, and with Frenchmen, strongly supported us in the idea that belief in Christianity decreased in proportion to the progress of knowledge, in every part of the world. As to myself, I declare that I did not expect to find a sincere Christian among educated Englishmen. Providence, however, so directed events, that some of my first acquaintance in London were persons whose piety was adorned with every good quality of the heart and mind. It was among these excellent friends, and under the protection of British liberty, that the soreness and irritation produced by ten years' endurance of the most watchful religious tyranny, began to subside.

I was too much ashamed of being supposed a Roman Catholic, to disguise the character of my religious opinions; but the mildness and toleration with which my sentiments were received made me perceive, for the first time, that a Christian is not necessarily a bigot. The mere throwing away the hated mask which the Inquisition had forced me to wear, refreshed my soul; and the excellent man to whom, for the first time in my life, I acknowledged my unbelief without fear, was able to perceive that I might yet be a Christian, provided I saw religion divested of all force but that of persuasion.

An accident (if any thing which leads to results so important can be so called) made me, in an idle moment, look into Paley's Natural Theology, which lay upon a table. I was struck by the author's peculiar manner and style: I borrowed the book, and read it with great interest. Feelings of piety towards the great author of Nature began to thaw the unnatural frost which misery, inflicted in his name, had produced in a heart not formed to be ungrateful. It was in this state of mind that, being desirous of seeing every thing

worthy of observation in England, I went one Sunday to St. James's church. A foreigner, ignorant of the language, would have brought away nothing but an unpleasant recollection of the length of the service; but I had learnt English in my childhood, and could understand it, at this time, without difficulty. The prayers, though containing what I did not believe, appeared to me solemn and affecting. I had not for many years entered a church without feelings of irritation and hostility, arising from the ideas of oppressive tyranny which it called up in my mind; but here was nothing that could check sympathy, or smother the reviving sentiments of natural religion, which Paley had awakened. It happened that, before the sermon, was given Addison's beautiful hymn,

> When all thy mercies, O my God!
> My rising soul surveys,
> Transported with the view, I'm lost
> In wonder, love, and praise.

At the end of the second verse my eyes were streaming with tears; and I believe that from that day, I never passed one without some ardent

aspirations towards the author of my life and existence.

This was all the change that for a year or more, took place in my religious notions. Obliged to support myself chiefly by my pen, and anxious at the same time to acquire some branches of learning which Spanish education neglects, my days and nights were employed in study: yet religion had daily some share of my attention. I learnt that the author of the Natural Theology had also written a work on the Evidences of Christianity, and curiosity led me to read it. His arguments appeared to me very strong; but I found an intrinsic incredibility in the facts of revealed history, which no general evidence seemed able to remove. I was, indeed, labouring under what I believe to be a very common error in this matter—an error which I have not been able completely to correct, without a very long study of the subject and myself. I expected that *general* evidence would remove the natural *inverisimilitude* of miraculous events: that, being convinced by unanswerable arguments that Christ and his disciples could be neither impostors nor enthusiasts, and

that the narrative of their ministry is genuine and true, the imagination would not shrink from forms of things so dissimilar to its own representations of real objects, and so conformable in appearance with the tricks of jugglers and impostors. Now the fact is, that *probable* and *likely*, though used as synonimous in common language, are perfectly distinct in philosophy. The *probable* is that for the reality of which we can allege some reason: the *likely*, that which bears in its face a semblance or analogy to what is classed in our minds under the predicament of existence*. This association is made early in life, among Christians, in favour of the miraculous events recorded in the Holy Scriptures; and, if not broken by infidelity

* *Likely* is the adjective of the phrase *like the truth, simile vero.* It is strange that the English language should not possess a substantive answering to *le vraisemblable* of the French. The use of *improbable* to denote what in that language is meant by *invraisemblable*, is incorrect. When the French critics reject some indubitable historical facts from the stage, because they want *vraisemblance* (likelihood), they do not mean to say that they are *improbable*, or deficient in proofs of their reality; but that the imagination finds them *unlike* to what in the common opinion is held to be the usual course of events.

in after-life, the study of the Gospel evidence gives those events a character of reality which leaves the mind satisfied and at rest; because it finds the history of revealed religion not only *probable*, but *likely*. It is much otherwise with a man who rejects the Gospel for a considerable period, and accustoms his mind to rank the supernatural works recorded by Revelation, with falsehood and imposture. *Likelihood*, in this case, becomes the strongest ground of unbelief; and *probability*, though it may convince the understanding, has but little influence over the imagination.

A sceptic who yields to the powerful proofs of Revelation, will, for a long time, experience a most painful discordance between his judgment and the associations which unbelief has produced. When most earnest in the contemplation of Christian truth, when endeavouring to bring home its comforts to the heart, the imagination will suddenly revolt, and cast the whole, at a sweep, among the rejected notions. This is, indeed, a natural consequence of infidelity, which mere rea-

soning is not able to remove. Nothing but humble prayer can, indeed, obtain that faith which, when reason and sound judgment have led us to supernatural truth, gives to unseen things the body and substance of reality. But of this I shall have occasion to speak again.

The degree of conviction produced by Paley's Evidences was, however, sufficiently powerful to make me pray daily for divine assistance. This was done in a very simple manner. Every morning I repeated the Lord's Prayer seriously and attentively, offering up to my Maker a sincere desire of the true knowledge of him. This practice I continued three years; my persuasion that Christianity was not one and the same thing with the Roman Catholic religion, growing stronger all the while. As my rejection of revealed religion had been the effect, not of direct objection to its evidences, but of weighing tenets against them, which they were not intended to support; the balance inclined in favour of the truth of the Gospel, in proportion as I struck out dogmas, which I had been taught to identify with the doctrines of

Christ *. The day arrived, at length, when convinced of the substantial truth of Christianity, no question remained before me, but that of choosing the form under which I was to profess it. The deliberation which preceded this choice was one of no great difficulty to me. The points of difference between the church of England and Rome, though important, are comparatively few: they were, besides, the very points which had produced my general unbelief. That the doctrines common to both churches were found in the Scriptures, my early studies and professional knowledge, left me no room to doubt; and as the Evidences of

* Paley, with his usual penetration, has pointed out this most important result of the Reformation: "When the doctrine of Transubstantiation (he says in his address to Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle, prefixed to the Principles of Moral Philosophy) had taken possession of the Christian world, it was not without the industry of learned men that it came at length to be discovered that no such doctrine was contained in the New Testament. But had those excellent persons done nothing more by their discovery than abolished an innocent superstition, or changed some directions in the ceremonial of public worship, they had merited little of that veneration with which the gratitude of Protestant churches remembers their services. What they did for mankind was this—*they exonerated Christianity of a weight that sunk it.*"

Revelation had brought me to acknowledge the authority of the Scriptures, I could find no objection to the resumption of tenets which had so long possessed my belief. The communion in which I was inclined to procure admission was not, indeed, that in which I was educated; but I had so long wandered away from the Roman fold, that, when approaching the church of England, both the absence of what had driven me from Catholicism, and the existence of all the other parts of that system, made me feel as if I were returning to the repaired home of my youth.

Upon receiving the sacrament for the first time according to the form of the English church, my early feelings of devotion revived; yet by no means, as it might be feared in a common case, with some secret leaning to what I had left; for Catholicism was thoroughly blended with my bitterest recollections. It was a devotion more calm and more rational; if not quite strong in faith, yet decided as to practice. The religious act I performed I considered as a most solemn engagement to obey the laws of the Gospel; and I thank God, that since that period, whatever

clouds have obscured my religious views, no deliberate breach of the sacred law has increased the sting of remorse which the unbelieving part of my life left in my breast.

The renovated influence of religion, cherished by meditation and study, induced me, after a period of a year and a half, to resume my priestly character; a step without which I thought I had not completed the re-acknowledgment I owed to the truth of Christianity. If any one unacquainted with my circumstances should be inclined to suspect my motives, he may easily ascertain his mistake, by inquiring into the uniform tenour of my conduct since, in 1814, I subscribed the articles of the church of England.

Having now done what I conceived to be a public duty, I retired to Oxford, not to procure admission into the university, which my age would have rendered preposterous; but to live privately in that great seat of learning, devoting my time exclusively to the study of the Scriptures. I had resided a year in that place, when an English nobleman, who since he knew me in Spain has ever honoured me with his friendship, gave

me the highest proof of esteem by inviting me to become tutor to his son. I accepted the charge, though with fears that the declining state of my health would greatly disqualify me for the important duties to which I was called; and which I discharged for two years to the best of my power, till my growing infirmities compelled me to resign.

Neither the duties of the tutorship, nor the continual sufferings which I have endured ever since, could damp my eagerness in the search of religious truth. Shall I be suspected of *cant* in this declaration? —Alas! let the confession which I am going to make, be the unquestionable, though melancholy proof of my sincerity.

For more than three years my studies in divinity were to me a source of increasing attachment to Christian faith and practice. When I quitted my charge as tutor, I had begun a series of short lectures on religion, the first part of which I delivered to the young members of the family *. Having retired to private lodgings in London, it

* These Lectures were published at Oxford, in 1817, with the title of PREPARATORY OBSERVATIONS ON THE STUDY OF RELIGION, BY A CLERGYMAN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

was my intention to prosecute that work, for the benefit of young persons; but there was by this time a mental phenomenon ready to appear in me, to which I cannot now look back without a strong sense of my own weakness. My vehement desire of knowledge not allowing me to neglect any opportunity of reading whatever books on divinity came to my hands, I studied the small work on the Atonement, by Taylor of Norwich. The confirmed habits of my mind were too much in accordance with every thing that promised to remove *mystery* from Christianity, and I adopted Taylor's views without in the least suspecting the consequences. It was not long, however, before I found myself beset with great doubts on the divinity of Christ. My state became now exceedingly painful; for, though greatly wanting religious comfort in the solitude of a sick room, where I was a prey to pain and extreme weakness, I perceived that religious practices had lost their power of soothing me. But no danger or suffering has, in the course of my life, deterred me from the pursuit of truth. Having now suspected that it might be found in the Unitarian system, I boldly set out upon the search; but there I did not find it. Whatever industry and attention

could do, all was performed with candour and earnestness; but, in length of time, Christianity, in the light of Unitarianism, appeared to me a mighty work to little purpose; and I lost all hope of quieting my mind. With doubts unsatisfied wherever I turned, I found myself rapidly sliding into the gulf of scepticism: but it pleased God to prevent my complete relapse. I knew too well the map of infidelity to be deluded a second time by the hope of finding a resting-place to the sole of my foot, throughout its wide domains: and now I took and kept a determination to give my mind some rest from the studies, which, owing to my peculiar circumstances, had evidently occasioned the moral fever under which I laboured. What was the real state of my faith in this period of darkness, God alone can judge. This only can I state with confidence,—that I prayed daily for light; that I invariably considered myself bound to obey the precepts of the Gospel; and that, when harassed with fresh doubts, and tempted to turn away from Christ, I often repeated from my heart the affecting exclamation of the apostle Peter—"to whom shall *I* go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

For some time I thought it an act of criminal insincerity to approach, with these doubts, the sacramental table; but the consciousness that it was not in my power to alter my state of mind, and that if death, as it appeared very probable, should overtake me as I was, I could only throw myself with all my doubts upon the mercy of my Maker; induced me to do the same in the performance of the most solemn act of religion. But I had not often to undergo this awful trial. Objections which, during this struggle, had appeared to me unanswerable, began gradually to lose their weight on my mind. The Christian Evidences which, at the period of my change from infidelity, struck me as powerful *in detail*, now presenting themselves *collectively*, acquired a strength which no detached difficulties (and all the arguments of infidelity are so) could shake*. My mind, in

* I believe it a duty to mention a work which, under Providence, contributed to put an end to my trial; I mean the *Internal Evidences of Christianity*, by the Rev. John Bird Sumner:—a book which I would strongly recommend to every candid inquirer into religious truth, as containing one of the most luminous views, not only of the proofs, but the doctrines of the Gospel, which it was ever my good fortune to peruse.

fact, found rest in that kind of conviction which belongs peculiarly to moral subjects, and seems to depend on an intuitive perception of the truth through broken clouds of doubt, which it is not in the power of mortal man completely to dispel. Let no one suppose that I allude to either mysterious or enthusiastic feelings; I speak of conviction arising from examination. But any man, accustomed to observe the workings of the mind, will agree, that conviction, in intricate moral questions, comes finally in the shape of internal feeling—a *perception* perfectly distinct from syllogistic conviction, but which exerts the strongest power over our moral nature. Such *perception* of the truth is, indeed, the spring of our most important actions, the common bond of social life, the ground of retributive justice, the parent of all human laws. Yet, it is inseparable from more or less doubt; for *doubtless* conviction is only to be found about objects of sense, or those abstract creations of the mind, pure number and dimension, which employ the ingenuity of mathematicians. That assurance respecting things not seen, which the Scriptures call *Faith*, is a *supernatural* gift,

which reasoning can never produce. This difference between the conviction, resulting from the examination of the Christian Evidences, and *Faith*, in the Scriptural sense of the word, appears to me of vital importance, and much to be attended to by such as, having renounced the Gospel, are yet disposed to give a candid hearing to its advocates. The power of the Christian Evidences is that of leading any considerate mind, unobstructed by prejudice, to the records of Revelation, and making it ready to derive instruction from that source of supernatural truth; but it is the *Spirit of truth* alone, that can impart the internal conviction of *Faith*.

I have now gone through the religious history of my mind, in which I request you to notice the result of my various situations. Under the influence of that mental despotism, which would prevent investigation by the fear of eternal ruin, or which mocks reason by granting the examination of premises, while it reserves to itself the right of drawing conclusions, I was irresistibly urged into a denial of Revelation: but no sooner did I obtain freedom than, instead of my mind running riot in the enjoyment of the long-delayed

boon, it opened to conviction, and acknowledged the truth of Christianity. The temper of that mind shows, I believe, the general character of the age to which it belongs. I have been enabled to make an estimate of the moral and intellectual state of Spain, which few who know me and that country will, I trust, be inclined to discredit. Upon the strength of this knowledge, I declare again and again that very few among my own class (I comprehend clergy and laity) think otherwise than I did before my removal to England. The testimony of all who frequent the Continent—a testimony which every one's knowledge of foreigners supports—represents all Catholic countries in a similar condition. Will it, then, be unreasonable to suppose, that if a *fair* choice was given between the religion of Rome and other forms of Christianity, many would, like myself, embrace the Gospel which they have rejected? Is there not some presumption of error against a system which every where revolts an improving age from Christianity? Let us examine that system itself.

LETTER II.

Real and practical extent of the authority of the Pope, according to the Roman Catholic Faith. Intolerance, its natural consequence.

WERE I addressing Catholics, who live under the full and unchecked influence of the church of Rome, it would be unnecessary to come to a previous understanding of the true nature of their tenets; for even persons who have never looked into a theological treatise, are fully aware, in such countries, of the difference between some disputed points, and the doctrines which their church holds as immutable articles of faith. The case is, I perceive, much otherwise in England. From the attention which I have of late given to the books which issue out of the English Roman Catholic press, I am convinced that there exist two kinds of writers of your persuasion; one, who write for the Protestant public, and for such among yourselves as cannot well digest the real unsophisticated system of their Roman head; the other, for the

mass of their British and Irish church, who still adhere to the Roman Catholic system, such as it is professed in countries where all other religions are condemned by law. In your devotional books, and in such works as are intended to keep up the warmth of attachment to your religious party, I recognise every feature of the religion in which I was educated; in those intended for the public at large, I only find a flattered and almost ideal portrait of those to me well-known features, which, unchanged and unsoftened by age, the writers are conscious, cannot be seen without disgust by any of those to whom custom has not made them familiar.

The most artful picture of this kind which has come to my hands is the *Book of the Roman Catholic Church*, by Charles Butler, Esquire, of Lincoln's Inn. The high character which the author bears for learning and probity makes me desirous to avoid even the shadow of a charge implying any thing derogatory to those qualities; but I cannot hesitate to declare that his statement of the Roman Catholic doctrines, since it must be believed to have been drawn with sincerity, pre-

sents a strange instance of the power of prejudice in distorting the clearest objects. In another part of this book* you will find a striking proof that the vehemence of his party spirit goes even to impair his knowledge of the Latin language, and makes a man, whom report classes among your best scholars, render a passage into English, in a manner so far from giving the meaning of the original, that it contradicts itself in the translation.

Had such inaccuracies affected only points of secondary importance, or related exclusively to the many historical facts to which Mr. Butler's book refers, I would leave them to more learned and experienced critics; but as he has, besides, given an incorrect view of your most essential duties as Catholics, I must beg your attention to some remarks on that part of his book which treats of the authority of the Pope. He that, fully aware of the nature of his engagements to the Church of Rome, is still determined to obey her, should not be disturbed in the use of his

* See note A.

discretion; but varnished accounts of religious systems must not be allowed to rivet religious prejudice, or stand as a lure to the unwary.

The *Book of the Roman Catholic Church* labours to persuade the world that the authority of the Pope over the Catholics is of so spiritual a nature, as, if strictly reduced to what the creed of that church requires, can never interfere with the civil duties of those who own that authority. That the supreme head of the Catholics has, for a long series of centuries, actually claimed a paramount obedience, and thus actually interfered with the civil allegiance of his spiritual subjects; is as notorious as the existence of the Roman see. The question, then, is whether this was a mere abuse, the effect of human passions encouraged by the ignorance of those ages, or a fair consequence of doctrines held by the Roman church as of divine origin, and consequently immutable. I will proceed in this inquiry upon Mr. Butler's own statement of the Roman Catholic articles of faith, which is found p. 118 of the first edition of his work.

"A chain of Roman Catholic writers on papal

power might be supposed: on the first link we might place the Roman Catholic writers who have immoderately exalted the prerogative of the Pope; on the last we might place the Roman Catholic writers who have unduly depressed it; and the centre link might be considered to represent the canon of the 10th session of the council of Florence, which defined that "full power was delegated to the bishop of Rome in the person of St. Peter, to feed, regulate and govern the universal church, as expressed in the general councils and holy canons." THIS (adds the author, in capitals) is the doctrine OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE POPE, and beyond it no Roman Catholic is required to believe."

When I examine the vague comprehensiveness of this decree, I can hardly conceive what else the Roman Catholics could be required to believe. *Full power to feed, regulate and govern the universal church,* can convey to the mind of the sincere Catholic no idea of limitation. Whatever be the extent of the chain imagined by our author, the decree appears to have been framed wide enough not to exclude the *link* containing the writers

who have most exalted the papal power. The task of those on the other extremity of the chain, is certainly more difficult ; for it cannot well be conceived why mere human rights should be allowed to limit a *full* power to govern the minds of men, derived from a direct injunction of Christ. Let this be, however, as it may, one thing is certain, that a true Catholic may understand the *full power of feeding, regulating and governing* the universal church according to either the *Transalpine* or *Cisalpine* explanation of the doctrine declared by the council of Florence. He may consequently believe, that the Pope has, " at the least, an *indirect* temporal power for effecting a spiritual good in any kingdom to which the universal church extends ;" and " that every state is so far subject to the Pope, that when he deems that the bad conduct of the sovereign renders it essential to the good of the church that he shall reign no longer, the Pope is authorised by his divine commission to deprive him of his sovereignty, and absolve his subjects from their obligation of allegiance *." A Catholic may, on

* Book of the Roman Catholic Church, p. 121.

the other hand, with the divines of the Gallican church, deny to the Pope this power of deposing princes. Of these two explanations of the *infallible* doctrine on the Pope's supremacy, Mr. Butler says, that "neither speaks the church's faith." This is, indeed, a remarkable fact. It is a fact from which we may infer, either that the Pope and his church do not understand the meaning of the *inspiration* on which they build the claim to infallibility, or that they receive that *inspiration* under a kind of political cipher, which, though laid before the eyes of the world, still leaves us in perfect obscurity as to its contents. Can any one doubt that the Pope, in the face of Christendom, issued a sentence of deposition against Queen Elizabeth? Had not a similar practice prevailed for many centuries before? Was this not done by virtue of what Popes conceived to be their divine prerogative, declared in the council of Florence? Did not the *greatest part* of the Catholic bishops allow, by their tacit or express consent, that the head of their church was acting in conformity with the *inspired* definition of his power? Were I not too well acquainted with

the extreme flexibility, the deluding slipperiness of Roman Catholic theology, I should contend that the sense of the council of Florence had, on these occasions, been fixed by infallible authority; for the Pope "may promulgate definitions and formularies of faith to the universal church, and when the general body, or a great majority of her prelates have assented to them, either by formal consent or *tacit consent*, all are bound to acquiesce in them *." But alas for those who *will not* be convinced! The bulls of deposition, though always prefaced by a declaration of doctrine concerning the power of the Roman see; though issued with all possible solemnity; though assented to by all the bishops, except, perhaps, a few among the subjects of the monarch so deposed and condemned—these bulls will be found not to be *definitions* and *formularies* of faith. They express a doctrine *tolerated* in the church of Rome, but not her faith: "this (says Mr. Butler) is contained in the canon of the council of Florence. *All the doctrine of that canon on the point in question*, and nothing but that doctrine, is pro-

* Book of the Roman Catholic Church, p. 120, 1st ed.

pounded by the Roman Catholic church to be believed by the faithful *." But will Mr. Butler tell us how the faithful are to ascertain what it is this ALL contains? No, he certainly cannot. His church *tolerates* the opinion which in this ALL, comprehends the authority to depose princes; nay, the Popes have acted according to that opinion, till the consolidation of the European powers tied their hands; but she also *tolerates* (the word is here in its place) the opinion of those who strike off from that ALL, no less a part than the Pope's supremacy over the sovereigns of the earth.

Little indeed has the *inspiration* of the Florentine fathers done for you, who, sincerely attached to the Roman Catholic church, are desirous to perform ALL your duty to its head. You might, indeed, have expected that, former Popes having unfortunately increased the obscurity of this important point of your faith by their political claims, those who have filled the Roman see in later times would have put an end to these doubts, by tolerating no longer, but publicly and positively disclaiming, the doctrines of supremacy embraced

* Book of the Roman Catholic Church, p. 124, 1st ed.

by their predecessors. Instead of allowing the English and Irish Catholics to apply to Catholic universities for declarations, which these bodies are not authorised to give, the Pope himself might at once have removed the doubt, as to the obedience which he claims from you. Why, then, this silence? why this *toleration* of an opinion which casts a suspicion upon your loyalty; which, if adopted, as you certainly may adopt it so long as it is *tolerated*, must more than divide your allegiance? I think I can explain the cause of this conduct.

If either of the two systems concerning the authority of the Pope were considered by the Roman Catholic church as absolutely false, she could not *tolerate* it consistently with her claims to infallibility: she must therefore believe them both *partially* true. This, however, could not take place if she understood the council of Florence (as Mr. Butler contends) in a sense equally distant from the two extreme theological opinions. If both express *partially* her own sense, that sense must be broad enough to embrace a substantial part of the two; and such is really the

case. The *Transalpine* * divines regard the grant supposed to have been made by Christ to the Pope, *abstractedly* from the external circumstances of the Roman church; and, considering that he who has *full* authority to feed the flock, must also have it to preserve the pasturage safe and unobstructed, assert that the deposition of a heretical prince falls within the divine prerogative of the head of the Roman Catholics. The *Cisalpine* writers, on the other hand, perceiving that the assertion of this doctrine, and any attempt to put it into practice, would defeat the object of the Pope's authority, by raising political opposition to the church; deny that such a specific power against secular princes was ever intended by Christ. The Roman see allows these two opinions to be held, because, as it believes that the Pope's power, to be *full*, must ex-

* *Transalpine* and *Cisalpine* are used here in a very unclassical sense; but as these denominations prevail among Roman Catholic divines, I am in a certain degree compelled to use them. If the reader imagines himself in France, where they were first used, the mistake into which they are apt to lead will easily be avoided. *Transalpine* writers are those who scarcely set any bounds to the authority of the Pope; *Cisalpine* those who, with Bossuet, contend for the privileges of the Gallican church.

tend to every act which circumstances may make advantageous to the church; it will not restrain his hands in any possible emergency from checking *political* opposition to the prosperity of the Roman Catholic religion. But as it *may be true* that under the circumstances of the civilized world, it will never be expedient to call upon Catholics to refuse their allegiance to an enemy of the Roman Catholic church, the *Cisalpine* opinions, which at first were strongly opposed by Rome, are at present *tolerated*.

I have hitherto examined the Roman Catholic doctrine concerning the Pope's supremacy, not because I conceive it to have any practical effect in this country, but in order to expose the vagueness, obscurity, and doubt in which the declaration of one of your *infallible* councils—a declaration, too, relating to so important a subject as the *divine* power of your *spiritual* head—is involved. The days, however, are no more when the Pope, in virtue of his *full power to feed, regulate, and govern you*, might endeavour to remove a Protestant king from the throne. The trial to which, as British subjects and Roman Catholics, you are still

exposed, is perfectly unconnected with the *temporal* claims of your ecclesiastical head; it flows directly from the *spiritual*. Hence the constant efforts of your political advocates to fix the attention of the public on the question of temporal supremacy, in which they may make a show of independence. Hence the irrelevant questions proposed to the Catholic universities, which, as their object was known, gave ample scope to the versatile casuistry of those bodies. Their task, in assisting their brethren of England and Ireland, would have certainly required a greater degree of ingenuity, had the following question been substituted for the three which were actually proposed:—*Can the Pope, in virtue of what Roman Catholics believe his divine authority, command the assistance of the faithful in checking the progress of heresy, by any means not likely to produce loss or danger to the Roman Catholic church; and can that church acknowledge the validity of any engagement to disobey the Pope in such cases?* This is a question of great practical importance to all *sincere* Catholics in these kingdoms. Allow me, therefore, to canvass it according to the settled principles of your

faith and practice, since political views prevent your own writers from placing it in its true light.

At the time when I am writing this, one branch of the legislature has declared itself favourable to what is called Catholic emancipation; and, for any thing I can conjecture, Roman Catholics may be allowed to sit in parliament before these Letters appear in public. A *Roman Catholic* legislator of *Protestant* England would, indeed, feel the weight of the difficulty to which my suggested question alludes, provided his attachment to the Roman Catholic faith were sincere. A *real* Roman Catholic once filled the throne of these realms, under similar circumstances; and neither the strong bias which a crown at stake must have given to his mind, nor all the ingenious evasions proposed to him by the ablest divine of the court of Louis XIV. could remove or disguise the obstacles which his *faith* opposed to his political duties. The source of the religious scruples which deprived James II. of his regal dignity, is expressed in one of the questions which he proposed to several divines of his persuasion. It comprises, in a few words, what every candid mind

must perceive to be the *true and only* difficulty in the admission of Roman Catholics to the parliament of these kingdoms. What James doubted respecting the *regal sanction*, a member of either house may apply to the more limited influence of his vote. He asked "Whether the king could promise to give his assent to all the laws which might be proposed for the greater security of the church of England?" Four English divines, who attended James in his exile, answered without hesitation in the negative. The casuistry of the French court was certainly less abrupt. Louis XIV. observed to James, that "*as the exercise of the Catholic religion could not be re-established in England, save by removing from the people the impression that the king was resolved to make it triumph, he must dissuade him from saying or doing any thing which might authorise or augment this fear.*" The powerful talents of Bossuet were engaged to support the political views of the French monarch. His answer is a striking specimen of casuistic subtlety. He begins by establishing a distinction between adhering to the erroneous principles professed by a church, and the protection

given to it "*ostensibly, to preserve public tranquillity.*" He calls the Edict of Nantes, by which the Huguenots were, for a time, tolerated, "*a kind of protection to the reformed, shielding them from the insults of those who would trouble them in the exercise of their religion.* It never was thought (adds Bossuet) that the conscience of the monarch was interested in these concessions, *except so far as they were judged necessary for public tranquillity. The same may be said of the king of England; and if he grant greater advantages to his Protestant subjects, it is because the state in which they are in his kingdoms, and the object of public repose, require it.*" Speaking of the Articles, the Liturgy, and the Homilies, "it is not asked (he says) that the king should become the promoter of these three things, *but only that he shall* OSTENSIBLY *leave them a free course, for the peace of his subjects.*" "The Catholics (he concludes) ought to consider the state in which they are, and the small portion they form of the population of England; which obliges them not to ask what is impossible of their king, but on the contrary, to sacrifice all the advantages with which

they might vainly flatter themselves, to the real and solid good of having a king of their religion, and securing his family on the throne, though Catholic; *which may lead them naturally to expect in time, the entire establishment of their church and faith**."

Such is the utmost stretch which can be given to the Roman Catholic principles in the toleration of a church which dissents from the Roman faith. A conscientious Roman Catholic may, for the sake of public peace, and in the hope of finally serving the cause of his church, *ostensibly give a free course* to heresy. But, if it may be done without such dangers, it is his unquestionable duty to undermine a system of which the direct tendency is, in his opinion, the *spiritual and final* ruin of men. Is there a Catholic divine who can dispute this doctrine? Is there a learned and conscientious priest among you, who would give absolution to such a person as, having it in his power so to direct his votes and conduct in parliament as to diminish the influence of Protestant principles, without disturbing or alarming the country, would still heartily

* See the whole of Bossuet's answer in note B.

and stedfastly join in promoting the interest of the English church? Let the question be proposed to any Catholic university; and, though I am fully aware of the inexhaustible resources of casuistry, I should not fear to stake the force of my argument upon its honest and conscientious answer.

The author of the *Book of the Roman Catholic Church* rejects as a gratuitous imputation whatever is attributed to that church, without the express authority of one of her definitions of faith. I will only remind those who are well acquainted with the Roman Catholic system of divinity, that, in what relates to moral and practical principles, such references cannot fairly be demanded. The definitions of your church upon such points are very few. Some moral doctrines have been censured as lax, some as being of a depraving tendency; but the consciences of Catholics are guided by the broad rules of action acknowledged by all Christians. In the application of these rules there is, indeed, some variety of opinion among your moralists; for as they often dwell upon imaginary cases, an ample field is left to ingenuity for all the

shifts and turns of expediency. The doctrine, however, that he, who being able to prevent a sin allows its commission, is guilty of that sin and its consequences, requires no sanction from Pope or council. No Christian will ever deny this position; and even a deist, if he is to preserve consistency, will be obliged to admit its justness. This being so, it follows with unquestionable certainty that a Roman Catholic cannot, without guilt, lend his support to a Protestant establishment, but is bound, as he wishes to save his soul, to miss no opportunity of checking the progress of heresy: the most grievous of all moral offences, according to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic church. Murder itself is less sinful, in the judgment of the Roman see, than a deliberate separation from her communion and creed. I need not prove this to those who are disposed to recognize the Roman Catholic doctrines in the face of the world; but if any one still doubts the place which heresy holds in the Roman Catholic scale of criminal guilt, let him explain away, if he can, the following passage of the papal bull which is every year published in the Spanish dominions, under the

title of The Crusade. By that bull, every person who pays a small sum towards an imaginary war against infidels, is privileged to be released from all ecclesiastical censures and receive absolution at the hands of any priest, of all, whatever sins, he may have committed, "even of those censures and sins which are reserved to the apostolic see, *the crime of heresy excepted**." Is it then to cherish, foment, and defend this heinous crime—the crime which the Pope exempts from the easy and plenary remission granted to the long list of abominations left for the ear of a common priest—is it *this crime*, as established, honoured, and endowed by the law of England, that you are anxious to sanction with your votes in parliament?

Suppose, for a moment, that it were possible for such a state as that of the Old Man of the Mountain or Prince of the Assassins, to have grown into a powerful nation, and reduced a Christian people under its dominion, without extinguish-

* "Que puedan elegir Confesor Secular o Regular, de los aprobados por el ordinario, y obtener de el plenaria indulgencia, y remision de qualquiera pecados y censuras, aun de los reservados, y reservadas a la Silla Apostolica, ecepto el crimen de heregia." Bula de la Cruzada.

ing their faith: the condition of these Christians would have greatly differed at two different periods. Before a sad experience had convinced them of the inadequacy of their power to overcome those enemies of God and man, they would naturally have fought openly and manfully against the assassin establishment, or died martyrs in passive resistance. When finally subdued, two courses alone would be left open: either to keep their hands clean from blood, by declining all participation in the acts of the government, or join it with the intention of checking, by indirect means, the commission of an interminable series of crimes, secured by the constitutional laws of the state. Is there, I ask, any difference between this case and that of *real* Roman Catholics under a Protestant government, whose very essence is to maintain a separation from the communion of Rome, thereby placing millions of souls in a state which, you are bound to believe, cancels their title to salvation as Christians?

I am aware that a practical sense of the absurdity of this tenet of your church has forced many of you to avert their eyes from it, and

persuade themselves that it is possible to be a Roman Catholic without holding the absolute exclusion of heretics from the benefits of Christ's redemption. This, believe me, is an error. Examine that profession of faith in which your church has set forth her fundamental doctrines, and you will find that she positively confines salvation to her members, and makes this very article a necessary condition for reception within her pale*. Your English catechisms endeavour to throw a sort of veil on this doctrine, by stating that Protestants may be saved if they labour under *invincible ignorance* of the true Roman Catholic faith; leaving such as are unacquainted with their theological language to understand, that by *invincible ignorance*, is meant unconquerable conviction. But has the church of Rome ever modified her declarations against heretics, even with that poor and degrading exemption of *ignorance?* Will the learned conviction of a Melancthon, a

* "This true Catholic faith, OUT OF WHICH NONE CAN BE SAVED, which I now freely profess and truly hold, I, *N.* promise, vow, and swear, most constantly to hold," &c. &c. *Creed of* Pius IV.

Calvin, a Grotius, an Usher, and the innumerable host of Protestant luminaries, pass under the humble denomination of that *ignorance*, on which Catholic divines allow a chance of eternal happiness to pagans and savages? If *sincere conviction* is a valid plea with the Roman Catholic church, why has she scattered to the winds the ashes of those who allowed that conviction to be tried in her inquisitorial fires?

I rejoice to find the dogma of intolerance branded in the *Book of the Roman Catholic Church* with the epithet of DETESTABLE*; but cannot help wondering that a man who thus openly expresses his detestation of that doctrine should still profess obedience to a see, under whose authority the inquisition of Spain was re-established in 1814. If Catholics are so far improved under the Protestant government of England as to be able to *detest* persecution, by what intelligible distinction do they still find it consistent to cling to the source of the intolerance which has inundated Europe with blood, and still shows its old disposition unchanged, wherever it

* Book of the Roman Catholic Church, p. 303, 1st ed.

preserves an exclusive influence? In what church did Spain learn the necessity of forbidding her subjects, *for ever*, the right of choosing their religious tenets, and that at the very moment when she was proclaiming a *free* constitution? Who has induced the republican governments of Spanish America to copy the same odious law in their new codes?—That church, no doubt, who looks complacently on such acts and declarations, in countries where even her silence stamps public doctrines with the character of truth. Yes; the "*detestable dogma of religious intolerance*" is publicly and solemnly proclaimed in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church, without a single observation against it from the Pope or bishops of that church; nay, the legislators themselves are forced to proclaim and sanction it against their own conviction, because the mass of the people are allowed by the church to understand that such are their duty, and her belief.

If the Roman Catholic Church can thus allow *detestable dogmas* to act in full force within the inmost recesses of her bosom, those Catholics who differ from her notions, so far as her apologist

Mr. Butler, might guide themselves in religious matters without the assistance of her infallibility. That able writer allows himself to be blinded by the spirit of party, when he labours to prove that intolerance does not belong exclusively to his Church; and charges Protestants with persecution. That Protestants did not at once perceive the full extent of the fundamental principle of the Reformation—the inherent right of every man to judge for himself on matters of faith—can neither invalidate the truth of that luminous principle, nor bind subsequent Protestants to limit its application. It is a melancholy truth, that Protestants did persecute at one *time*; but it is a truth which rivets the accusation of inherent and essential intolerance upon that Church, whose erroneous doctrines the patriarchs of the reformation could not cast off at once. Thanks be to the protecting care of that Providence, which, through them, prepared the complete emancipation from religious tyranny which Protestants enjoy at this moment; the *infallibility* of their churches made no part of the common belief on which they agreed from the beginning, or the spirit of intolerance

would only have changed its name among us. The dogma of an infallible judge of religious subjects is the true source of bigotry; and whoever believes it in his heart, is necessarily and conscientiously a persecutor. A *fallible* Church can use no compulsion. If she claim "authority on matters of faith," it is to declare her own creed to those who are *willing* to be her members. The *infallible judge*, on the contrary, looks on his pretended gift as a miraculous divine commission, to stop the progress of what he condemns as an error. He persecutes and punishes dissenters, not because they cannot be convinced by his reasons, but for obstinate resistance to his supernatural authority. Rome never doomed her opponents to the flames for their errors, but their *contumacy*. It is by this means that she has been able so often to extinguish sympathy in the breast of her followers; for error excites compassion, while rebellion never fails to kindle indignation.

The Roman Catholics have been accused of holding a doctrine which justifies them in not keeping faith with heretics. This charge is false as it stands; but it has a foundation in truth which I will lay

before you, as an important consequence of the claims of your church to infallibility. The constant intercourse with those whom you call heretics, has blunted the feeling of horror which the Roman Church has assiduously fomented against Christians who dissent from her. It is, indeed, a happy result of the Reformation, that some of the strongest prejudices of the Roman Catholics have been softened wherever the Protestant religion has obtained a footing. Where this mixture has never taken place, true Roman Catholics remain nearly what they were in the time when Christendom rejoiced at the breach of faith, which committed Huss to the flames by the sentence of a general council. In England, however, far from pretending to such unfair advantages, the Roman Catholics resent the suspicion that their oaths, not to interfere with the Protestant establishment, may be annulled by the Pope. The settled and sincere determination to keep such oaths, in those who appear ready to take them, I will not question for a moment; but I cannot conceal my persuasion, that it is the duty of every Roman Catholic pastor to dissuade the members of their

flocks from taking oaths which, if not allowed in a spirit of the most treacherous policy, would imply a separation from the communion of the Church of Rome. Let me lay down the doctrine of that church on this important point.

I will assume the most liberal opinion of the Catholic divines, and grant that the Pope cannot annul an oath in virtue of his dispensing power*. But this can only be said of a *lawful* oath; a quality which no human law can confer upon an engagement to perform a sinful act. A promise under oath, to execute an immoral deed, is in itself a monstrous offence against the divine law; and the performance of such a promise would only aggravate the crime of having made it. There are, however, cases where the lawfulness of the engagement is doubtful, and the obligation bur-

* Thomas Aquinas, whose authority is most highly reverenced in these matters, maintains, however, that there exists a power in the church to dispense both with a vow, which, according to him, is the most sacred of all engagements, and, consequently, with an oath. *Sicut in voto aliquâ necessitatis seu honestatis causâ potest fieri dispensatio, ita et in juramento.* Secunda Secundæ Quest. lxxxix. Art. ix. The popes, in fact, have frequently exercised this dispensing power with the tacit consent of the church.

densome, or, by a change of circumstances, inexpedient and preposterous. The interference of the Pope, in such cases, is, according to the liberal opinion which I am stating, improperly called *dispensation*. The Pope only declares that the original oath, or vow, was null and void, either from the nature of the thing promised, or from some circumstances in the manner and form of the promise; when, by virtue of his authority, the head of the church removes all spiritual responsibility from the person who submits himself to his decision. I do not consider myself bound to confirm the accuracy of this statement by written authorities, as I do not conceive the possibility of any Roman Catholic divine bringing it into question.

The Roman Catholic doctrine on the obligation of oaths being clearly understood, *sincere* members of that church can find no difficulty in applying it to any existing test, or to any oath which may be tendered, in future, with a view to define the limits of their opposition to doctrines and practices condemned by Rome. In the first place, they cannot but see that an oath binding them to lend a

direct support to any Protestant establishment, or to omit such measures as may, without finally injuring the cause of Catholicism, check and disturb the spread and ascendancy of error; is in itself sinful, and cannot, therefore, be obligatory. In the second place it must be evident that if, for the advantage of the Catholic religion suffering under an heterodox ascendancy, some oaths of this kind may be tolerated by Catholic divines, the head of that church will find it his duty to declare their nullity upon any change of circumstances. The persevering silence of the Papal see in regard to this point, notwithstanding the advantages which an authorized declaration would give to the Roman Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland, is an indubitable proof that the Pope cannot give his sanction to engagements made in favour of a Protestant establishment. Of this, Bossuet himself was aware, when to his guarded opinion upon the scruples of James II. against the coronation oath, he subjoined the salvo:—"I nevertheless submit with all my heart to the supreme decision of his Holiness." If that decision, however, was then, and is now, withheld, notwithstanding the

disadvantages to which the silence of Rome subjects the Roman Catholics, it cannot be supposed that it would at all tend to remove them. To such as are intimately acquainted with the Catholic doctrines, which I have just laid before you, the conduct of the Roman see is in no way mysterious.

It would be much more difficult to explain upon what creditable principle of their church, the Catholic divines of these kingdoms can give their approbation to oaths tendered for the security of the Protestant establishment. The clergy of the church of England have been involved in a general and indiscriminate charge of hypocrisy and simulation, upon religious matters. It would ill become one in my peculiar circumstances to take up the defence of that venerable body*; yet I cannot dismiss this subject without most solemnly attesting, that the strongest impressions which enliven and support my Christian faith, are derived from my friendly intercourse with members

* Since writing this passage, a most spirited and modest defence of the church of England clergy has been published by Dr. Blomfield, Lord Bishop of Chester.

of that insulted clergy; while, on the contrary, I knew but very few Spanish priests whose talents or acquirements were above contempt, who had not secretly renounced their religion. Whether something similar to the state of the Spanish clergy may not explain the support which the Catholic priesthood of these kingdoms, seem to give to oaths so abhorrent from the belief of their church, as those which must precede the admission of members of that church into parliament; I will not undertake to say. If there be conscientious believers among them, which I will not doubt for a moment, and they are not forced into silence, as I suspect it is done in similar cases *, I feel assured that they will earnestly deprecate, and condemn all engagements on the part of the Roman Catholics, to support and

* I recollect something about the persecution of one Mr. Gandolphy, a London priest, who was obliged to appeal personally to Rome against the persecution of his brethren, for exposing too freely the doctrines which might increase the difficulties of Catholic emancipation. The Pope did not condemn him. Since writing this note I have seen the case of Mr. Gandolphy stated in an able publication of the Rev. George Croly, entitled *Popery and the Popish Question*. Mr. G.'s doctrines were highly approved at Rome.

defend the church of England. Such an engagement implies either a renunciation of the tenet excluding Protestants from the benefits of the Gospel promises, or a shocking indifference to the eternal welfare of men.

If your leaders, whom it would be uncharitable to suspect of the latter feeling, have so far receded from the Roman creed as to allow us the common privileges of Christianity, and can conscientiously swear to protect and encourage the interests of the church of England, let them, in the name of truth, speak openly before the world, and be the first to remove that obstacle to mutual benevolence, and perfect community of political privileges—the doctrine of exclusive salvation in your church. Cancel but that one article from your creed, and all liberal men in Europe will offer you the right hand of fellowship. Your other doctrines concern but yourselves; this endangers the peace and freedom of every man living, and that in proportion to your goodness; it makes your very benevolence a curse. Believe a man who has spent the best years of his life where Catholicism is professed without the check

of dissenting opinions; where it luxuriates on the soil, which fire and sword have cleared of whatever might stunt its natural and genuine growth; a growth incessantly watched over by the head of your church, and his authorized representatives, the Inquisitors. Alas! "*I have a mother*," outweighed all other reasons for a change, in a man of genius*, who yet cared not to show his indifference to the religious system under which he was born. I, too, "had a mother," and such a mother as, did I possess the talents of your great poet, tenfold, they would have been honoured in doing homage to the powers of her mind and the goodness of her heart. No woman could love her children more ardently, and none of those children was more vehemently loved than myself. But the Roman Catholic creed had poisoned in her the purest source of affection. I saw her, during a long period, unable to restrain her tears in my presence. I perceived that she shunned my conversation, especially when my university friends drew me into topics above those of domestic talk. I loved her; and this behaviour

* Pope: see his letter to Atterbury on this subject.

cut me to the heart. In my distress I applied to a friend to whom she used to communicate all her sorrows: and, to my utter horror, I learnt that, suspecting me of anti-catholic principles, my mother was distracted by the fear that she might be obliged to accuse me to the Inquisition, if I incautiously uttered some condemned proposition in her presence. To avoid the barbarous necessity of being the instrument of my ruin, she could find no other means but that of shunning my presence. Did this unfortunate mother overrate or mistake the nature of her Roman Catholic duties? By no means. The Inquisition was established by the supreme authority of her church; and, under that authority, she was enjoined to accuse any person whatever, whom she might overhear uttering heretical opinions. No exception was made in favour of fathers, children, husbands, wives: to conceal was to abet their errors, and doom two souls to eternal perdition. A sentence of excommunication, to be incurred in the fact, was annually published against all persons, who having heard a proposition directly or indirectly contrary to the Catholic Faith, omitted to inform the in-

quisitors upon it. Could any sincere Catholic slight such a command?

Such is the spirit of the ecclesiastical power to which you submit. The monstrous laws of which I speak, do not belong to a remote period: they existed in full force fifteen years ago: they were republished under the authority of the Pope, at a later period. If some of your writers assume the tone of freedom which belongs to this age and country; if you profess your Faith without compulsion; you may thank the Protestant laws which protect you. Is there a spot in the universe where a Roman Catholic may throw off his mental allegiance, except where Protestants have contended for that right, and sealed it with their blood? I know that your church modifies her intolerance according to circumstances, and that she tolerates in France, after the revolution, the Hugonots, whom she would have burnt in Spain a few years ago, and whom she would doom to some indefinite punishment, little short of the stake, at this present moment. Such conduct is unworthy of the claims which Rome contends for, and would disgrace the most obscure leader of a

paltry sect. If she still claims the right of wielding "the sword of Peter," why does she conceal it under her mantle? If not, why does she not put an end to more than half the miseries and degradation of Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Spanish America, by at once declaring that *men are accountable only to God for their religious belief*, and that *sincere and conscientious persuasion must, both in this and the next world, be a valid plea for the pardon of error?* Does the Church of Rome really profess this doctrine?—It is then a sacred duty for her to remove at once that scandal of Christianity, that intolerance which the conduct of Popes and councils has invariably upheld *. But if, as I am persuaded, Rome still thinks in conformity with her former conduct, and yet the Roman Catholics of these kingdoms dissent from her on this point, they have already begun to use the Protestant *right of private judgment* upon ONE of the articles of their faith; and I may hope that they will follow me in the examination of that alleged divine authority

* Note C.

by which they are prevented from extending it to ALL.

POSTSCRIPT.

Want of books, or rather want of sufficient health to undergo the fatigue and discomfort of consulting them in public libraries, had made me proceed in the composition of these Letters deriving the materials from my own stores, and from the book itself against the general tendency of which I was induced to take up the pen. My knowledge of the Roman Catholic doctrines led me soon to conclude that Mr. Butler was a writer who, on the fairest construction, knew how to divert his adversaries from all the weak points of his cause. Yet I trusted that the accuracy of his quotations might be depended upon, especially when he gave us authorized statements of the Roman Catholic tenets. The translation of the creed of Pius IV., which Mr. Butler inserted in his Book of the Roman Catholic Church, was, therefore, the only document of that kind from which I deduced my arguments to prove the duty incumbent on Roman Catholics to propagate their

religion by every means in their power. Whether I have succeeded or failed in proving that fact by inference, my readers will decide. But upon a revision of my arguments, I do not regret that *an omission* which I subsequently discovered in Mr. Butler's translation of that creed deprived me, at first, of the easiest and most direct proof which I could wish to support my assertion. For had I consulted the original at once, the *positive* confirmation which that document gives it, and my own familiar conviction of its truth, would have induced me to save myself the exertion of fully developing my argument. As it now happens, I flatter myself that my readers will give me some credit for accuracy in the knowledge of the Roman Catholic doctrines, when they shall see that a theoretical reasoning from her established general principles, fully and accurately agrees with a positive injunction of the church of Rome, of which lapse of time had made me forget the existence.

Let us, then, compare the last article in Mr. Butler's translation of the creed, with the original.

Mr. Butler's translation:—"This true catholic

faith, out of which none can be saved, which I now freely profess, and truly hold, I, *N.*, promise, vow, and swear most constantly to hold and profess the same whole and entire, with God's assistance, to the end of my life. Amen."

The Latin original.—" Hanc veram catholicam fidem, extra quam nemo salvus esse potest, quam in præsenti sponte profiteor, et veraciter teneo, eandem integram, et inviolatam, usque ad extremum vitæ spatium constantissime (Deo adjuvante) retinere et confiteri, ATQUE A MEIS SUBDITIS, VEL ILLIS QUORUM CURA AD ME IN MUNERE MEO SPECTABIT, TENERI, DOCERI, ET PRÆDICARI, QUANTUM IN ME ERIT, CURATURUM EGO IDEM N. SPONDEO, VOVEO, AC JURO."

Now, the words in small capitals, omitted by Mr. Butler, contain the very pith and marrow of the strongest argument against the admissibility of Roman Catholics to parliament. For if the most solemn profession of their faith lays on every one of her members who enjoys a place of influence, the duty of "*procuring, that all under him, by virtue of his office, shall hold, teach, and preach* the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, and

this under an oath and vow; how can such men engage to preserve the ascendancy of the Church of England in these realms?

When, in the New Times of the 5th of April, I exposed this important omission before the public, I thought that Mr. Butler would have explained the origin of it. But I am not aware of his having given any explanation. Neither on that, nor on the present occasion, is it my intention to cast a suspicion on that gentleman's good faith. He probably copied from some garbled translation, prepared by less scrupulous members of his communion, who wished to conceal the real tenets of their church from a Protestant public. At all events, this fresh instance of inaccuracy on a most important point, gives additional propriety to caution in reading Mr. Butler's defences of Catholicism.

LETTER III.

Examination of the title to infallibility, spiritual supremacy, and exclusive salvation, claimed by the Roman Catholic Church. Internal evidence against Rome, in the use she has made of her assumed prerogative. Short method of determining the question.

AT the conclusion of my preceding Letter, I entreated you to examine the title by which your church deprives her members of the right of private judgment on religious matters, and denies salvation to those who venture to think for themselves. In making this request I may appear to have overlooked the very essence of your religious allegiance, and to demand a concession which would at once put you out of the pale of the Roman church. But I beg you to observe, that whatever be the extent of the authority of that church over you, there is one point which it cannot withhold from the judgment and verdict of your reason. The *reality* of her title to be the guide and rule of your faith, must be a matter, not of authority, but of proof. He that claims

obedience in virtue of delegated power, is bound to prove his appointment. Any attempt to deprive those who without that appointment would be his equals, of the liberty to examine the authority, nature, and extent of the decree which constitutes the delegate above them; is an invasion of men's natural liberty, as well as a strong indication of imposture. If before we come to God we must, through nature, believe that he is, surely before we yield our reason to one who calls himself God's Vicar, our *reason* should be satisfied that God has truly appointed him to that supereminent post.

How then stands the case between the church of Rome and the world?

The church of Rome proclaims that Jesus Christ, both God and man, having appeared on earth for the salvation of mankind, appointed the apostle Peter to be his representative; made him the head of all the members of his church then existing; and granted a similar privilege to Peter's successors, without limitation of time. To this she adds, that, to the church, united under Peter and his successors, Christ ensured an infallible

knowledge of the sense of the Scriptures, and an equally infallible knowledge of certain traditions, and their true meaning. On the strength of this divine appointment, the church of Rome demands the same faith in the decisions of her head, when approved "by the tacit assent or open consent of the greatest part of her bishops," as if they proceeded from the mouth of Christ himself. The divine commission, on which she grounds these claims, runs in these words of Christ to the chief of his apostles: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

It will not be denied that between this unquestionable authority and the statement which precedes it, there is no verbal agreement. A man unacquainted with the system of divinity supported by the church of Rome, would, probably, perceive no connexion between the alleged passage and the commentary. But let us suppose that

these words of our Saviour contain the meaning in question: yet, no man will deny, that if they do contain it, it is in an indirect and obscure manner. The fact then is, that even if the church of Rome should be really endowed with the supernatural assistance which she asserts, the divine founder of Christianity was pleased to make the existence of that extraordinary gift one of the least obvious truths contained in the Gospels. It might have been expected, however, that Peter, in his Epistles, or in the addresses to the first Christians which the Acts record, would have removed the obscurity; and that, since the grant of infallibility to him, to his peculiar church, and to his successors in the see of that church (either independently of the infallibility of others, or in combination with other privileged persons,—for this is also left in great obscurity) was made the only security against the attacks of hell; he would have taken care to explain the secret sense of Christ's address to him. Peter, however, does not make the slightest allusion to his privileges. His successors being not named in the supposed original

grant of supremacy, it was in course that, by an express declaration, Peter would obviate the natural inference, that they were excluded from his own personal prerogatives. But Peter is equally silent about his successors; and to add to the original mysteriousness of the subject, he never mentions Rome, and dates his epistles from Babylon. Babylon may figuratively mean Rome; the silence of both our Saviour and his apostle may, by some strange rule of interpretation, be proved to denote those successors; the whole system, in fine, of the Roman Catholic church may be contained in the alleged passage; but, if so, it is contained like a diamond in a mountain. The plainest sense of any one passage of the Scriptures cannot be so palpable as the obscurity of the present. It follows, therefore, with all the force of demonstration, that the divine right claimed by the Pope and his church to be the infallible rule of faith having no other than an obscure and doubtful foundation, the belief in it cannot be obligatory on all Christians; who are left to follow the suggestions of their individual judgment as to the

obscure meaning of the Scriptures, till the Scriptures themselves shall be found to demand the resignation of that judgment.

I request you to observe, that the force of my argument does not depend upon the erroneousness of the Roman interpretation of the passages alleged for the spiritual supremacy; all I contend for is the *doubtfulness* of their meaning: for to suppose that the divine founder of Christianity, while providing against doubt in his future followers, would miss his aim by overlooking the obscurity in which he left the remedy he wished to appoint; is a notion from which Christians must shrink. It follows, therefore, either that Christ did not intend what the Romanists believe about Peter and his church; or that, since he concealed his meaning, an obedience to the Roman church cannot be a necessary condition in his disciples.

The liberty which, upon the supposition most favourable to Rome, Christ has granted to believers in his Gospel, the Pope and his church most positively deny them. Placing themselves between mankind and the Redeemer, they allow

those only to approach him, who first make a full surrender of their judgment to Popes and councils. A belief in Christ and his work of redemption, grounded on the Scriptures and their evidences, is thus made useless, unless it is preceded by a belief in Roman supremacy, grounded on mere surmises. Christianity is removed from its broad foundation, to place the mighty fabric upon the moveable sand of a conjectural meaning.

This looks more like love of self than of Christ; more like ambition than charity. The title to infallibility and supremacy being at *the best* doubtful, the benefit of the doubt should have been left to Christian liberty.—But may not the opposite conduct of the Roman church have arisen from sincere zeal for what she conceived to be the true intention of Christ? Christian candour would demand this construction, were it not for the use she has made of the assumed privilege: yet if we find that, having erected herself into an organ of Heaven, all her oracular decisions have invariably tended towards the increase of her own power; it will be difficult to admit the purity of her intentions.

By comparing the articles of the church of Rome with those of the church of England, we shall find that the points of difference are chiefly these: tradition, transubstantiation, the number of sacraments, purgatory, indulgences, and the invocation of saints. Such are the main questions on doctrine, at issue between the two churches; for the differences about free-will and justification might, I believe, be settled without much difficulty, by accurately defining the language on both sides. Now, I will not assume the truth of the Protestant tenets on these points, nor enter into arguments against those of the Roman church; my present concern is with their tendency.

To begin with tradition: let us observe how broad a field is opened to the exercise of infallibility, by the supposition that an indefinite number of revealed truths, were floating down the stream of ages, unconsigned to the inspired records of Christianity. The power of interpreting the word of God by a continual light from above, might be confined by the Scriptures themselves, as it would be difficult to force doctrines on the belief of Christians, of which the very name and subject

seem to have been unknown to the inspired writers. *Divine tradition*, the first-born of *infallibility*, removes this obstacle; and, so doing, increases the influence of Rome to an indefinite extent. I do not *here* contend that to place *tradition* upon the same footing with the Scriptures, is an error; but whether error or truth, it is certainly *power* in the hands of the Roman church.

By the combined influence of *tradition* and *infallibility*, the church of Rome established the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*. From the moment that people are made to believe that a man has the power of working, at all times, the stupendous miracle of converting bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; that man is raised to a dignity above all which kings are able to confer. What, then, must be the honour due to a bishop, who can bestow the power of performing the miracle of transubstantiation? What the rank of the Pope, who is the head of the bishops themselves? The world beheld for centuries, the natural consequences of the surprising belief in the power of priests to convert bread and wine into the incarnate Deity *.

* Note D.

Kings and emperors were forced to kiss the Pope's foot, because their subjects were in the daily habit of kissing the hands of priests—those hands which were believed to come in frequent contact with the body of Christ.

The abundance of ceremonies supposed to produce supernatural effects, must magnify the character of the privileged ministers of those ceremonies. Hence a church possessing seven sacraments, is far superior in influence to one who acknowledges but two. Add to this the nature of four out of the five *Roman* sacraments—penance, extreme unction, ordination, and matrimony—and the extent of power which she thereby obtains, will appear. Penance, *i. e.* auricular confession, puts the consciences of the laity under the direction of the priesthood. Extreme unction is one of her means to allay fear and remorse. Ordination is intimately connected with the influence which the Roman church derives from transubstantiation, and its being made a sacrament adds probability to the miraculous powers which it is supposed to confer. Finally, by giving the sacramental character to matrimony, the source and

bond of civil society is directly and primarily subjected to the church.

There still remain three exclusive offsprings of tradition, explained and defined by infallibility, which yield to none in happy consequences to the Roman church,—indulgences, purgatory, and the worship of saints, relics, and images.

The wealth which has flowed into the lap of Rome, in exchange for indulgences, is incalculable. Even in the decline of her influence, she still looks for a considerable part of her revenues from this source: to which also she owes the degree of subjection in which she keeps the Roman Catholic governments. My unfortunate native country shows the nature and extent of this influence in a striking light. I have already mentioned the *Bull of the Crusade*, through which the barter of indulgences and dispensations for money, is carried on, in a manner worthy of the darkest ages. The Spanish government has two or three paltry fortresses on the coast of Africa, which are employed as places of punishment for criminals. The existence of a few soldiers in these garrisons is construed into a perpetual war against the *Infidels*,

with whom, in the mean time, the King of Spain is mostly at peace, from inability to oppose to them an effectual resistance. The see of Rome, which wants but a slight pretext to *spiritualize* whatever may open a market for its wares, calls this state of things between the Spaniards and the Africans a *perpetual war against infidels;* which being, according to the principles of that see, a meritorious Christian act, deserves its pastoral encouragement. For this purpose every year are printed *summaries* of a Papal bull, which the Spaniards purchase at different prices, according to their rank and wealth, in order to enjoy the indulgences and privileges granted by the Pope in exchange for their alms. The benefits to be derived from the possession of one of these bulls are several plenary indulgences, and leave to eat, during Lent, milk, eggs, and butter, which are otherwise forbidden, under pain of *mortal sin*, at that season. The sale of these privileges having been found most valuable and extensive, a second, third, and even a fourth bull, of a similar kind, were devised. The *flesh* bull, as it is called in Spain, allows the purchasers to eat meat during Lent,

every Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, except in Passion Week. The third bull is called the *compounding bull.* By possessing one of these documents, and giving a certain sum, at the discretion of any priest authorised to hear confessions, to the fund of the *holy cruzade;* any property may be kept, which, having been obtained by robbery and extortion, cannot be traced to its right owners for restitution. This *composition* with the Pope and the King, is made by depositing the sum appointed by the confessor in an iron chest fixed outside the doors of churches: a comfortable resource indeed for the tender consciences of peculators and extortioners, two very numerous classes in Spain. The fourth bull is to be purchased for the benefit of the deceased, and is called the *defunct bull.* The name of any dead person being entered on the bull, a plenary indulgence is, by this means, believed to be conveyed to his soul, if suffering in purgatory. To secure, however, a double sale, the three latter bulls are made of no effect, unless the original *summary* of the cruzade be possessed by the person who wishes to enjoy the dispensations and privileges,

therein set forth. It is also a very common practice to bury these bulls with the corpses of those whom they are intended to benefit. The tax thus levied upon the people of Spain, is divided between the King and the Pope: yet it is not the money which, in this and similar transactions, proves most beneficial to Rome; the habit of spiritual dependence which it supports among the Spaniards is, no doubt, its most valuable result to that see. The Spanish Cortes, who were bold enough to reduce the tithes by one half; when struggling hard to shake off the silent yet formidable influence of the Pope, found their power inadequate to the task: well knowing that were he to withdraw one of these bulls, the mass of the people would instantly rise against them. I have selected this fact among thousands, that prove the accession of *power* which the doctrine of indulgences produces to the see of Rome.

The belief in purgatory is so inseparable from the former tenet, that I need not enlarge on the peculiar advantages which Rome has derived from it. I will only observe how fortunately for the interests of the church of Rome, not only the

existence, but even the mutual help and connexion of her *peculiar* doctrines, have happened. The power of remitting canonical penance would have been useless on the cessation of penitential discipline: but TRADITION having about the same time brought purgatory to light, offered an ample scope to the power of the Roman keys. Transubstantiation now presented the means of repeating the sacrifice of the cross for those who were supposed to be undergoing the purification by fire. The whole system, indeed, is surprisingly linked together, and the very connexion of its parts, tending to secure the influence and power of the source from whence it flows; gives it the appearance of an original invention, enlarged from the gradual suggestions of previous advantages.

The worship of saints, relics, and images might, when *tradition* began to spread it, have appeared less connected with the wealth and power of the church of Rome; yet none of its spiritual resources has proved more productive of both. Europe is covered with sanctuaries and churches, which owe their existence and revenues to some reported miraculous appearance of an image, or

the presence, real or pretended, of some relic. To form a correct notion of the influence which such places have upon the people, it is necessary to have lived where they exist. But the house of Loretto alone, would be sufficient to give some idea of the power and wealth which the church must have derived from similar sources, when the whole of Christendom was more ignorant and superstitious than the most degraded portions of it are at present. Of this fact, however, I am perfectly convinced by long observation, that were it possible to abolish sanctuaries, properly so called, and leave the same number of churches without the favourite virgins and saints which give them both that peculiar denomination and their popular charm; more than half the blind deference which the multitude pay to the clergy, and through the clergy to Rome, would quickly disappear.

The advantages resulting to Rome from the combined effect of indulgences, relics, saints and their images, are not, however, derived only indirectly through the deference enjoyed by her clergy. The bond thereby created between the

Pope and the most distant regions which acknowledge his spiritual dominion, is direct. The Mexican and the Peruvian expects the publication of the annual bull, which allows him to eat eggs and milk in Lent, enables him to liberate, by name, a certain number of his relations from purgatory, and enlarges the power of his confessor, for the absolution of the most hideous crimes. Wherever he turns, he sees a protecting saint, whose power and willingness to defend him, could not be ascertained without the supernatural and unquestionable authority of the Pope. It is the Holy Father who, by a solemn declaration, allots every district to the peculiar patronage of a saint; it is he who, by grants of indulgences, encourages the worship of those *miraculous* images which form central points of devotion over all the Roman Catholic world: it is he who warrants the supernatural state of incorruption of the body of one saint, and traces, with unerring certainty, some straggling limb to another. It is, finally, he who alone has the undoubted power of *virtually* furnishing the faithful with the relics of the most ancient or

unknown patriarchs and martyrs, by bidding the fragment of any skeleton in the catacombs, be part of the body in request *.

I do not intend to cast any part of your religious system into ridicule; though, I confess, it is difficult to mention facts like these, without some danger of exciting a smile. These and similar practices you will, perhaps, construe into innocent means of keeping up a sense of religion among the lower classes; but without insisting, at present, upon their demoralizing and degrading tendency, I only present them in conjunction with all the other means of power and influence which the church of Rome has drawn from the, at least, doubtful title, on which she grounds her spiritual supremacy. It is, indeed, of great importance in the question between Rome and the Protestants, to observe the consequences of their respective interpretation of scripture, in regard to their own interests. The mass of Christians who, unable

* This is called christening relics. The persuasion that bones so christened are as good as those of the favourite saint to whom they are attributed, is certainly general in my country. I have no doubt that it is common to all Catholics.

to weigh the theological arguments urged by the controversialists of both parties, content themselves with an implicit, and often an indifferent, acquiescence in the tenets which education chanced to impress on their minds; might form a pretty accurate notion of the whole case by the following easy and compendious method. They should, in the first place, endeavour to become familiar with the reasoning which shows the absurdity of settling the question of papal supremacy on other than Scriptural grounds. Let them remember, what cannot be too much repeated, the necessity of deriving the knowledge of any infallible expounder of the Scriptures from the testimony of those Scriptures, perused and understood without the aid of that expounder. To appeal to *divine* tradition as a rule for the interpretation of Scripture in this state of the question, is equally unreasonable and preposterous; since, from the nature of the case, there is, as yet, no infallible rule to distinguish *divine* tradition from human and fallible report. The next step in this momentous inquiry, is to ascertain, by human means, the true sense of such passages of the Scriptures as are

said to contain the appointment of a living supreme authority in matters of faith. Here, two sets of men, deeply learned in all the branches of divinity, present themselves as interpreters. These affirm that the passages in question, contain the rights and privileges which the church of Rome and her head, claim for themselves: those positively deny that the passages can bear such meaning. Remember again, I request you, that the decision must depend exclusively on the reasoning faculties of mankind. Which, now, of these two opposed masses of intellect, is most likely to catch the true meaning of the texts? Which of the two interpretations have we most reason to suppose free from the distortions of prejudice? Common sense answers the question: that which is directly against the interests of the interpreters. Europe lay prostrate at the feet of the Pope, and every member of his clergy was raised by the common opinion, to a rank and dignity to which even kings bowed their head. The meanest priest claimed and enjoyed exemptions which were often denied to the first nobles of the land. Wealth and honours were theirs; the law shrunk before them

when guilty, and piety was ready to throw a cloak on their vices. The church had, for many ages, been in possession of unrivalled power on earth, when, at the rousing voice of a few obscure men, who questioned the foundation of that mighty structure, a large portion of those that might have continued under its shelter, unanimously declared that the whole was a work of delusion, which had sprung from an original, unexamined error. Such was the *unanimous* conviction of all the Protestants, when no bias but that of a contrary tendency could exist in their minds. If *common sense*, therefore, must be the interpreter of divine authority, conveyed to us in human language; this fact alone suffices to point the side to which that plain and faithful guide gives its sanction.

The Reformed churches are taxed with their *variations*, as if, like Rome, they had pledged their existence upon infallibility. They have, indeed, varied and dissented from each other; with this difference from the oracular church of the Vatican, that they have not disguised their proceedings, nor set up an Inquisition as the guard

of their unity. But while the love of truth compelled the Reformers to expose themselves to the insults and raillery of their mortal enemies, by breaking into parties upon the more abstruse points of divinity; not even a doubt has disturbed their unanimity as to the insufficiency of the title to divine supremacy, by which Rome commands intellectual homage. That, indeed, was the only point of controversy which common sense could decide; and the renunciation of all the worldly advantages to which the Roman church invited the Reformers, had left their judgment unbiassed. Other disputes in divinity must be settled by a long, difficult, and laborious process of inquiry; but a privilege is a matter of fact which, if not *evidently* proved, becomes a nonentity. Now, the peculiar privilege claimed by Rome, essentially precludes *doubtful* proofs of its existence. A *doubtful* gift from God with a view to remove *doubt*, is a mockery of his wisdom. If the *common sense* of many learned and unbiassed minds is found to agree in denying that the Scripture passages alleged by Rome, in favour of her miraculous infallibility, contain a *clear* promise of that

gift, or describe in whom, and how it was to exist after the decease of the apostles; the pretensions of the Pope and his church must be visionary. The negative proof, in such cases,—the absence of a *clear* title—has the strength of demonstration. Nothing can weaken its force upon a candid mind, but the very common habit of starting away from newly discovered truth in fear of its consequences, which we have previously condemned.

I am aware that, unable as you must be to find a direct and sufficient answer to this argument, and inclined to admit its truth, as an honest mind will make you; yet a crowd of such consequences will deter you from the path into which reason is ready to lead you.—A church subject to error and division!—You shrink from such an inference, without remarking that the *preconceived* and *unproved* necessity of having an infallible church, is the true and only source of that illogical process, by which you have endeavoured to establish the *certain* existence of infallibility, upon the *uncertain* sense of a few words of the Gospel.

LETTER IV.

A specimen of the unity exhibited by Rome. Roman Catholic distinction between *infallibility* in doctrine, and liability to misconduct. Consequences of this distinction: , Roman Catholic unity and invariableness of Faith, a delusion. Scriptural unity of Faith.

"So long since as the council of Vienne (I quote the words of your great champion Bossuet, translated by your apologist Mr. Butler*) a great prelate, commissioned by the Pope to prepare matters to be treated upon, laid it down for a groundwork to the whole assembly, that they ought to *reform the church in the head and members.* The great schism which happened soon after, made this saying current, not among particular doctors only, as Gersen, Peter d'Ailly, and other great men of those times, but *in councils too;* and nothing was more frequently repeated in those of *Pisa* and *Constance.* What happened in the council of Basil, *where a reformation was unfor-*

* Book of the Roman Catholic Church, p. 156, 1st ed.

tunately eluded, and the church re-involved in new divisions, is well known." Such is the picture of the Roman Catholic church at the beginning of the fifteenth century, drawn by the most able as well as cautious of her divines. The distinct mention of the *unfortunate* cause which prevented the proposed Reformation, would have given more colour and individuality to the picture. It was, in fact, a revival of the *great schism*, which for fifty years had lately kept the Roman Catholic church divided between two or three Popes, who at one and the same time, claimed the prerogative of vicars of Christ: it was a fierce contest between the council of Constance and Eugenius IV., the Pope who had convened it, and whom the assembled bishops wished to reform: it was a sentence of excommunication issued by the council against Eugenius: it was a rival council convoked at Ferrara by the excommunicated Pope, where he employed the same arms against the fathers assembled at Basil: it was the deposition of Eugenius and the installation of Felix V. by the offended council: it was, in fine, the triumph of Rome against the spirit which

had attempted to execute the work, of which "great prelates," "particular doctors," and "councils too," spoke so frequently, as to establish it into a "current saying," that the church needed reform in *head and members*. The *head*, unwilling to be reformed, imprecated the curse of Heaven upon the *members*; and the *members* finding that *head* incurable, chose for themselves another, when they had duly devoted the refractory one to the unquenchable fire. Such are the "well-known" events which took place in "*the council of Basil, where a reformation was unfortunately eluded, and the church re-involved in new divisions.*"

And now, I will ask, is this the unity, the harmony, without which your writers contend that the church of Christ cannot exist? Is it thus that the necessity of your interpretation of the Scripture passages, on which the system of infallibility has been erected, is sanctioned by experience? Can you still close your eyes against the demonstration contained in my preceding letter, because *variations* and dissent are in the train of its consequences?

"Our troubles and dissensions, however, (you are taught to answer) are limited to externals; those of the Protestants affect the unity of the faith." Such is the last shelter, the citadel, of your infallible-church theory. See, then, the series of assumptions, doubts, and evasions of which that theory consists, and observe its inevitable consequences. 1st. You assume that which is in question, the *necessity* of an infallible judge of faith. 2dly. Upon the strength of that assumption, you interpret certain passages of Scripture, so that they are made to prove the existence of such a judge. 3dly. You are then in doubt as to the identity of the judge himself, without being able to determine by any fixed rule, whether the supernatural gift of infallibility belongs to the Pope alone, or to the Pope and the general council*. 4thly. When, to evade this difficulty, you avail yourselves of the term church, as embracing the privileges of the Pope and council; you are still obliged to contrive another method, which may meet the objections arising

* Note E.

from such dissensions between the assembled bishops and their head, as took place in the instances above mentioned. This you do by allowing no council to be infallible till it has been approved by the Pope, and thus resolve church infallibility into the opinion of the Roman see. 5thly, and finally, You intrench yourselves within the distinction of infallibility on abstract doctrines of faith, and liability to practical error. Now, observe, I entreat you, the consequences to which the whole system leads. The only *sensible* mark of a legitimate council, being the approbation of the Pope; and the only *sensible* mark of a legitimate Pope, being his undisputed possession of the see of Rome; you have, in the first place, entailed the gift of infallibility upon the strongest of the rival candidates for that see; and, as moral worth is, by the last distinction, denied to be a necessary characteristic of the vicar and representative of Christ, you have added, in the second place, one chance more of having for your *living rule of faith* that candidate who shall contend for the visible badge of his spiritual and supernatural office, under the least restraint of moral obliga-

tion. If we find, therefore, upon consulting the history of the Popes, that no episcopal see has oftener been polluted by wickedness and profligacy, the fact is explained by the preceding statement. What chance of success to be head of the Christian church could attend a true disciple of Jesus, when a Borgia was bent upon filling that post? Gold, steel, and poison, were the familiar instruments of his wishes; whilst the belief that *faith* was still safe in the custody of such a monster, prevented opposition from the force of public opinion. The *faithful* still revered in Alexander VI. (be the blasphemy far from me!) the true representative of Christ on earth.

The strength of mind which enabled the reformers to disregard the generally received distinction between exemption from doctrinal errors, and liability to misconduct, cannot be adequately valued by those who have never imbibed that scholastic prejudice. When a distinction of this kind has once become incorporated with common language, men seem to be placed out of the reach of conviction on the points it affects. If my observations of intellectual phenomena do not deceive

me, the mass of those who may be said to think at all can go no farther in a reasoning process, than just to perceive one difficulty against their settled notions, and to catch some verbal quibble which removes the difficulty from their sight. The process of examining the usual fallacies of such answers is, to most men, so painful that any serious attempt to urge them upon it, seldom fails to rouse their anger. There are, indeed, but few who can take a true second step in reasoning.

The stand which is generally made at the first stage of an argument, is more resolutely taken when arguments are brought against a system which is itself a palliative of some previous objection. The case now before us is perhaps the best illustration of my view of popular intellect.

Christianity was at an early period systematized according to the notions and habits which some of its learned converts had acquired in the philosophical schools. It was soon presented to the world in the shape of a new theory, where the links which appeared to be wanting between the clearly revealed doctrines were supplied by the

ingenuity of inference. Nothing, we know, is so opposed to this vulgar systematic spirit as taking facts as they are. The chasm between what *is*, and an assumed standard of what *should be*, must be filled up. Few men refuse to grant what is demanded with this object; for fragments of real knowledge are not to the taste of the multitude. Having agreed that the Gospel was a revelation from God, they could not conceive the possibility of doubt affecting it directly or indirectly. Optimism is the system of the many: a revelation which could not remove every doubt, and silence every objection, must certainly fail to suit their previous notions.

Had these Christians, however, studied the Scriptures without the bias of such notions, they would have found that the divine author of Christianity has nowhere provided a remedy against doubt and dissent. There were heretics when the church was still under the personal guidance of the Apostles; yet the New Testament mentions them without allusion to any infallible method of ending these first disputes on

doctrines. On a *practical* question, indeed, we find that St. Paul was sent to ask the opinion of the church of Jerusalem; yet, that very opinion* was, in part, set aside and neglected, soon after, by the tacit consent of most other churches*. The natural inference from such facts is, that the analogy of God's moral government was not broken in the direct revelation which he made to the world through his own son; but, having granted us convincing proofs that the Scriptures contain the knowledge supernaturally vouchsafed to man, he has left the search thereof to human industry. Industry supposes difficulty, and difficulty implies danger. The field of moral discipline does not appear to have been changed by Christianity: the light, indeed, thrown upon it is clearer, and "the high prize of our calling" is made fully to shine in our eyes; but it nowhere appears that we are therefore to close them, and run blindly after certain men endowed with supernatural vision.

* The injunction against eating blood and suffocated animals, though given as from the Holy Ghost, was considered as of mere temporary expediency, and set aside as soon as heathen converts formed the majority of Christians.

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Such sober reasoning upon *facts*, could not be popular in the Christian church. An infallible judge of abstract questions was wanting, and one was soon found; for St. Peter was the chief of the apostles, and Rome the chief of cities. Nothing, therefore, appeared more *natural*, than that Peter should be bishop of Rome; and little proof of this fact was demanded: tradition, a mere report, was sufficient for those who wished it to be so. Yet something more was necessary to fulfil the object of the first theory or supposition; for Peter could not live for ever, and the judge of faith was to exist till the end of the world. But what could be more *natural* than that Peter's successors should inherit his supernatural gifts? In popular logic, what is *natural*, *i. e.* what agrees with some original supposition, is certain. Subsequent doubts, arising from a system so *natural*, must be settled any way, or left unsettled. Whether infallibility belonged to the Pope alone, or to the Pope and the church, and who was to be considered the church—these minutiæ were left for the ingenuity of divines. The Pope and Rome were all in all for the mass of Christians. The effects of un-

controlled power, however, soon became visible in the monstrous corruptions of Rome herself. Here the second step of popular intellect was required, *viz.* to seize the happy distinction of *infallibility* in doctrine, and profligacy in morals. Who that loves wealth, power, and pleasure, would wish to be a *sinless* oracle? No: the system of spiritual supremacy was now complete: the original supposition, that the church could not resist the attacks of hell without an unerring judge of abstract questions, had been followed to its remotest consequences; he that ventured to doubt the accuracy of the whole theory was declared a heretic. The Pope might be, in his conduct, an enemy of Christ and his gospel, and nevertheless succeed in the enjoyment of whatever privileges were granted to Peter, *in consequence* of the love which, above the other apostles, he bore to his divine master*. He might be a monster of vice, yet he did not cease to be *vicar* of him *who did no sin*. The church, under his guidance, might be corrupt

* Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. *John* xxi. 15. *et seq.*

in "*head* and *members*;" but still she must be infallible in matters of faith.

To the *solidity* of this structure have your divines committed the stability of the church of Christ: unless all this be true, the gates of hell have actually prevailed against her. A moral corruption in *head* and *members*; a system which ensured the continuance of this corruption, by repeatedly defeating the efforts of those who wished for a reformation, were, if we believe them, no subject of triumph to the enemy of God and man. As long as the authority of Rome was safe, the gates of hell had still the worst of the contest: let the Pope possess the *heads* of Christians, and Satan was welcome to their *hearts*. "The followers of Luther," says Bossuet*, "assuming the title of reformers, gloried that they had fulfilled all Christendom's desires, inasmuch as a reformation had been long the desire of Catholics, people, doctors, and prelates. In order, therefore, to authorise this pretended *reformation*, whatsoever church-writers had said against the disorders, both

* Ubi supra.

of the people and even of the clergy, was collected with great industry. But in this lay a manifest conceit, there not being so much as one of all the passages alleged, wherein these doctors ever dreamt of altering the church's faith; of correcting her worship, which chiefly consisted in the sacrifice of the altar; of subverting the authority of her prelates, that of the Pope especially—the very scope which this whole reformation, introduced by Luther, tended to."

If there be any *conceit* in the matter, it is that of admitting the extreme corruption of the Christian church, with the unavailing efforts of the advocates of reform, who preceded Luther; and yet blaming the Protestants because, by making the Pope's supremacy the "very scope" of their reformation, they took the only effectual method of putting an end to the evil. The absurd notion that the unity of the church of Christ depended on *unity* with the bishop of Rome, tied the hands of all Christians who wanted either the knowledge or the courage to examine the airy basis of that system.

The *sword* and *the faggot*, besides, stood in the

way of approach to that delicate point; else the invectives so carefully restricted to *morals* would not have always left the *doctrines* untouched. Submit your understanding to Rome; confess that you cannot hope for salvation out of the Pope's communion; acknowledge that immorality and wickedness do not detract from his supernatural privileges; and, on these conditions, you are at liberty to oppose the corruptions of the church of Christ. *Conceit* is not, indeed, a word which I should apply to such advice: *deceit* would seem more appropriate.

Invariableness in doctrine is Bossuet's criterion of the Christian characteristic of *unity*; but surely any set of men, who agreed on a system similar to that on which Roman unity depends, might equally boast of *invariableness* and *unity*: surely there cannot be, at least there cannot appear, any difference of opinion in a society which excludes every member who does not submit his own views to those of one individual, placed at its head; and which lays down, as an indubitable fact, that that individual, whoever he may happen to be, and whatever he may add to the common

doctrines of the society, always speaks the mind of his predecessors, and only gives explicitness to things implied in former decisions. Such is the artful contrivance which the author of the *Variations of the Protestant Churches* disguises into a miraculous unity of doctrine and belief; the effect, as he pretends, of Christ's promise of support to his church against the gates of hell. Raking up, besides, all the calumnies and atrocious reports with which the character of the opposers of Rome has been blackened at all times, and setting in the strongest light of mutual opposition the theological disputes which divided the reformers, he gives the whole weight of his authority and talents to a delusion, which nothing but an overwhelming combination of interest and prejudice could prevent his acute mind from perceiving. Had the Bishop of Meaux bestowed the ten-thousandth part of the perverse industry with which he followed that argument, in examining the gratuitous assumption on which it is founded, we may hope that his honesty would have directed his pen to some other topic. Instead of availing himself of the inveterate notion that Christ had established

an infallible judge in his church, lest, by the existence of doubt as to the sense of the Scriptures, there should be diversity of opinion among his followers—instead of taking it for granted that the victory of hell depended on the diversity of abstract doctrines among Christians, and not in the prevalence of dark works of wickedness, provided they were wrought in the unity of Papal faith—he should, in the spirit of philosophical reasoning, have penetrated to that part of the argument which conceals the gratuitous assumptions whence the whole Roman Catholic theory has sprung. When Catholics have proved, without the aid of *church authority*, that the church of Christ must be infallible, then, and not before, they may object their *variations* to the Protestants.

The Protestants have *varied* in search of the divine simplicity of the Gospel, which Rome had buried under a mountain of metaphysical notions. The Protestants have *varied*, because they could not at once divest themselves of the habits of thinking which they had acquired in the Roman Catholic schools. The Protestants have *varied*, because they had the honesty not to imitate the

contrivances by which the Roman church gives to her new decisions the appearance of unity with the preceding. The Protestants have *varied*, because they would not, upon the fanciful notion of a perpetual miracle, claim for any of their churches the supernatural gift of unerring wisdom, nor counterfeit by obstinacy in error, the conscious certainty of inspiration. The Protestants, in fine, have *varied*, because, by restoring the Scriptures to their full and unrivalled authority, they perceived the intrinsic power of settled, recorded, *invariable* revelation; and were aware that, in spite of doubts and divisions, the light of those divine records needed no help to withstand the attacks of the gates of hell.

If mere controversy were my object, I should feel satisfied with having demonstrated that the system of Roman Catholic unity is but an arbitrary contrivance; a gratuitous assumption of a supernatural privilege, which is nowhere *clearly* asserted in the Scriptures; an endeavour to produce certainty by a standard conceived and planned upon conjecture. A more Christian feeling, however, induces me to dwell still on this subject, and

propose to you what I conceive to be the true scriptural notions on the *unity* of the church of Christ.

In reading the New Testament with a mind carefully freed from the prejudices of school-divinity, it is impossible not to perceive that the assemblies of men who are called to obtain salvation through Christ, cannot either singly or collectively constitute *the* church, whereof the Roman see has tried to appropriate the qualities and privileges to herself. Wherever men assemble in the name of Jesus, there he has promised to be by means of his spirit; and certainly the works of that spirit are more or less visible in the Christian virtues, which never yet failed to spring up in these *particular* churches, though mixed with the tares, and other evils, which are not separable from "the kingdom of heaven" in this world. But there is a structure of sanctity in perpetual progress, towards the completion of which the Christian churches, on earth, are only made to contribute as different quarries do towards the raising of some glorious building. The churches on earth partake, in various proportions, of the attributes of

the great church of Christ, "which is his body, the FULNESS of him that filleth all in all*." But the church to which the great privileges and graces belong, has characteristic marks which cannot be claimed by any one of the churches on earth; for it is that church "which Christ loved, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having *spot or wrinkle or any such thing*; but that it should be holy and without blemish†." To become members of that church we should, indeed, "endeavour to keep the *unity* of the spirit in the bond of peace‡;" but such unity is proposed as the effect of *endeavour*, and consequently of choice and judgment, not of blind submission to a silencing authority, which is the Roman bond of union. The true *unity* of Christians must arise from the "one hope of our calling." There is indeed for us "one Lord, one faith, one baptism;" but that faith is a faith of trust, a "confidence, which hath great recompense of reward§,"

* Ephes. i. 23.
† Ephes. v. 25—27.
‡ Ib. iv. 3.
§ Heb. x. 35.

not an implicit belief in the assumed *infallibility* of men, who make a monopoly of the written word of God, prescribe the sense in which it must be understood, and with a refined tyranny, which tramples equally upon Christian liberty, and the natural rights of the human mind, insult even silent dissent, and threaten bodily punishment to such as, in silence and privacy, may have indulged the freedom of their minds*.

Such is the saving faith of the council of Trent! How different from that proposed by St. Paul, when he says, "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead,

* Præterea ad coercenda *petulantia* ingenia, decernit (eadem sacrosancta synodus) ut nemo suæ prudentiæ innixus, in rebus fidei et morum, ad ædificationem doctrinæ Christianæ pertinentium, sacram Scripturam ad suos sensus contorquens, contra eum sensum quem tenuit et tenet sancta mater ecclesia, cujus est judicare de vero sensu et interpretatione Scripturarum sanctarum, aut etiam contra unanimem consensum sanctorum patrum, ipsam Scripturam sacram interpretari audeat, *etiamsi hujusmodi interpretationes nullo unquam tempore in lucem edendæ forent. Qui contravenerint per ordinarios declarentur, et pœnis a jure statutis puniantur.*—Decretum Concilii Trident. de editione et usu sacrorum librorum, Sessione IV.

thou shalt be saved*." "That is the word of faith which WE preach," says St. Paul; and well might that faith be made the bond of union between all the churches which the Apostles saluted, without requiring a previous proof of their implicit submission. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," is St. Paul's language. Cursed be they who, whatever be their love of Christ and veneration for the Scriptures, yield not obedience to the church of Rome; is the spirit of every page which has been published by Popes or councils.

Whatever might be the effect of the prejudices which the first reformers brought away from their *Roman captivity;* whatever the necessity which Protestant churches still acknowledge of preventing internal feuds, by proposing formularies of faith to their members, they have never so misunderstood "what spirit they are of" as to deny salvation to those who love their common Lord and Redeemer. Their churches, indeed, may differ on points which the subtilty of meta-

* Rom. x.

physics had unfortunately started long before the reformation, and even before the publication of Christianity: they may observe different ceremonies, and adopt different views of church hierarchy and discipline; but their spirit is the only one which deserves the name of *Catholic* in the genuine sense of that word; the only spirit, indeed, which can produce, even on earth, an image of the glorious church which will exist for ever in *one fold*, and under *one shepherd*.

LETTER V.

Moral character of the Roman Church. Celibacy. Nunneries.

THE attempt to describe the *moral character* of a collective body, which, constantly changing its composition, can seldom consist of the same elements for any considerable portion of time, will probably appear rash and invidious. A long familiarity with the subject which I have in hand, has, however, convinced me, that if there be any truth in the general observation, that men who act under certain laws and interests, in collective bodies, are swayed by a peculiar influence, which, without borrowing a foreign phrase, might be called *Corporation Spirit;* the church of Rome presents the strongest and most marked instance of that moral phenomenon. Its great antiquity, and the gigantic power which it has enjoyed for ages, are the natural and intelligible causes of those fixed views and purposes which, existing at all times in the mass of its living members, must

inevitably be imparted to its successive recruits. The character of no one man can be more indelibly stamped by a long life of consistent, systematic conduct, than that of a collective body which, for many centuries, has practically learnt the true source of its power. If, on the other hand, it should appear that, in describing the moral character of that body which Catholics consider as the only depositary of divine authority on earth, I bring a charge of guilt against the whole succession of men who have composed, and compose it at present; I must observe, that individual conduct, modified by corporate influence, cannot be judged by the common rules which guide us in estimating private character. That every *true* Roman Catholic, every man whose religious tenets are in strict conformity with those of Rome, must partake the spirit of his standard of faith, in proportion to his sincerity; my own experience would compel me to aver, independently of any theoretical conviction. But the same experience teaches me that the natural disposition of every person, has a certain degree of power to modify, though not to neutralize, the Roman Catholic re-

ligious influence.—This being premised, I will openly, before God and man, declare my conviction, that the necessity of keeping up the appearance of infallibility, makes the church of Rome, essentially and invariably, tyrannical; that it leads that church to hazard both the temporal and the eternal happiness of men, rather than alter what has once received the sanction of her authority; and that, in the prosecution of her object, she overlooks the rights of truth, and the improvement of the human understanding.

In the proof and substantiation of these charges I will strictly observe the conditions proposed for similar cases by the author of the Book of the Roman Catholic Church. "I beg leave to suggest," says Mr. Butler, "that, in every religious controversy between Protestants and Roman Catholics, the following rule should be observed: THAT NO DOCTRINE SHOULD BE ASCRIBED TO THE ROMAN CATHOLICS AS A BODY, EXCEPT SUCH AS IS AN ARTICLE OF THEIR FAITH*." Now, it is agreed on all hands, that a canon of a general council, approved by the Pope—i. e. a *rule*

* Book of the Roman Catholic Church, p. 9.

of belief delivered to the people, under the fearful sanction of an *anathema*, leaves no other alternative to a Roman Catholic but embracing the doctrine it contains, or being excluded from his church by excommunication. By one, then, of such canons, every member of the church of Rome is bound to believe that all baptized persons are liable to be compelled, *by punishment*, to be Christians, or what is the same in Roman Catholic divinity, spiritual subjects of the Pope. It is, indeed, curious to see the council of Trent, who passed that law, prepare the free and extended action of its claims, by an unexpected stroke of liberality. In the Session on Baptism, the Trent Fathers are observed anxiously securing to Protestants the privileges of true baptism. The fourth canon of that Session fulminates an anathema or curse against any one who should say that baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, conferred by a heretic, with an intention to do that which the church intends in that sacrament, is not true baptism *. Observe, now, the

* Si quis dixerit baptismum, qui etiam datur ab hæreticis in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, cum intentione

consequences of this enlarged spirit of concession in the two subjoined canons.

"If any one should say that those who have been baptized are free from all the precepts of the holy church, either written or delivered by tradition, so that they are not obliged to observe them, unless they will submit to them of their own accord, LET HIM BE ACCURSED *."

Having soon after declared the lawfulness of infant baptism, they proceed to lay down the XIV. Canon.

"If any one should say that these baptized children, when they grow up, are to be asked whether they will confirm what their godfathers promised in their name; and that if they say they will not, they are to be left to their own discretion, and not to be forced, in the mean time, into the observance of a Christian life *by any other punishment* than that of keeping them from the

faciendi quod facit ecclesia, non esse verum baptismum, anathema sit.—Concil. Trident. Sess. VII. Can. IV.

* Si quis dixerit, baptizatos liberos esse ab omnibus sanctæ Romanæ ecclesiæ præceptis, quæ vel scripta vel tradita sunt, ita ut ea observare non teneatur, nisi se sua sponte illis submittere voluerint, anathema sit.

reception of the eucharist and the other sacraments till they repent, LET HIM BE ACCURSED*."

Now, "it is most true," says the author of the Book of the Roman Catholic Church, "that the Roman Catholics believe the doctrines of their church to be unchangeable; and that it is a tenet of their creed, that what their faith ever has been, such it was from the beginning, such it now is, and such it will ever be." Let him, therefore, choose between this boasted consistency of doctrine, and the curse of his church. The council of Trent, that council whose decrees are, by the creed of Pius IV., declared to be obligatory above all others†; that council has converted the sa-

* Si quis dixerit hujusmodi parvulos baptizatos, cum adoleverint, interrogandos esse, an ratum habere velint quod patrini, eorum nomine, dum baptizarentur, polliciti sunt, et, ubi se nolle responderint, suo esse arbitrio relinquendos, *nec alia interim pœna ad Christianam vitam cogendos*, nisi ut ab eucharistiæ, aliorumque sacramentorum perceptione arceantur donec resipiscant, anathema sit. Can. VIII. et XIV. de Baptismo.

† "I also profess and undoubtedly receive all other things delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred canons and general councils, *particularly by the holy* council of Trent, &c. &c." Creed of Pius IV. in the Book of the Roman Catholic Church, p. 8.

crament of Baptism into an indelible brand of slavery: whoever has received the waters of regeneration, is the thrall of her who declares that there is no other church of Christ. She claims her slaves wherever they may be found, declares them subject to her laws, both written and traditional, and, by her infallible sanction, dooms them to indefinite punishment, till they shall acknowledge her authority and bend their necks to her yoke. *Such is, has been, and will ever be*, the doctrine of the Roman Catholic church; such is the belief of her true and sincere members; such the spirit that actuates her views, and which, by every possible means, she has always spread among her children. Him that denies this doctrine, Rome devotes to perdition. The principle of religious tyranny, supported by persecution, is a necessary condition of true Catholicism: he who revolts at the idea of compelling belief by punishment, is severed at once from the communion of Rome.

What a striking commentary on these canons of the Council of Trent have we in the history of

the Inquisition! Refractory Catholics born under the spiritual dominion of Rome, and Protestants originally baptized out of her pale, have equally tasted her flames and her racks*. Nothing, indeed, but want of power, nothing but the much-lamented ascendancy of *heresy*, compels the church of Rome to keep her infallible, immutable decrees in silent abeyance. But the *divine* authority of those decrees, the truth of their inspiration, must for ever be asserted by every individual who sincerely embraces the Roman Catholic faith. Reason and humanity must, in them, yield to the infallible decree in favour of compulsion on religious matters. The human ashes, indeed, are scarcely cold which, at the end of three centuries of persecution and massacre, these decrees scattered over the soil of Spain. I myself saw the pile on which the last victim was sacrificed to Roman infallibility. It was an unhappy woman, whom the Inquisition of Seville committed to the flames under the charge of heresy, about forty years ago: she perished on a

* Llorente mentions the punishments inflicted by the Spanish Inquisition on English and French subjects.

spot where thousands had met the same fate. I lament from my heart that the structure which supported their melting limbs, was destroyed during the late convulsions. It should have been preserved, with the *infallible* and *immutable* canon of the Council of Trent over it, for the detestation of future ages.

How far, to preserve consistency, Rome, in the present time, would carry the right of punishing dissent, which her last general council confirmed with its most solemn sanction; it is not in my power to tell. It may be hoped that the spirit of the age has extinguished her fires for ever*: but the period I fear is still remote when she will change another part of her system, by which she ruins the happiness and morals of numbers,—I mean her monastic vows, and the laws which bind Catholic clergy to perpetual celibacy.

Where church infallibility is concerned, I can readily understand the necessity imposed on the most liberal individuals who have filled the Roman see, to adhere strictly to former decrees and declarations; but nothing can excuse or palliate the

* Note F.

proud obstinacy which Rome has always shown on such points of *discipline*,—as might be altered for the benefit of public morals, without compromising her claims. Such are the laws which annul and punish the marriages of secular clergymen, and those which demand perpetual vows from them who profess any of the numerous monastic rules approved by the Roman church, both for males and females.

I will not discuss the question, whether a life of celibacy is recommended in the New Testament as preferable to matrimony at all periods, and in all circumstances of the church. I will suppose, what I do not believe, that virginity, by its own intrinsic merit, and without reference to some virtuous purpose, which may not be attainable otherwise than by the sacrifice of the soft passions of the heart; has a mysterious value in the eyes of God: a supposition which can hardly be made without advantage to some part of the ancient Manichæan system—without some suspicion that the law, by which the human race is preserved, is not the pure effect of the will of God. I will not assail such views, which, more or less, might be

inferred from the writings of the Roman Catholic mystics. I will take up the subject on their own terms. Let virginity be the *virtue*, not (as I believe) the *condition* of angels: let it be desirable, as Saint Augustine expresses himself somewhere, that mankind were blotted from the face of the earth by the operation of celibacy *. Let all this be so; yet are not celibacy and virginity described in the New Testament as peculiar and uncommon gifts, as perilous trials, and likely to place human beings in a state which Saint Paul compares to burning? Are not the warnings and cautions given by our Saviour and his apostles, as frequent as the allusions to it? Did not Saint Paul fear that the very mention of this topic might become *a snare* to his converts?—But how is the subject of virginity and celibacy treated by the Roman Catholic church? The world rings with the praises of the

* I cannot tax my memory with the words, nor is the object worth the labour of a long search. I believe that St. Augustine, in answering the objection that, if all the world followed the principle he recommended, the earth would soon be a desert, says, with an air of triumph—*Oh felix mundi exitium!*

unmarried state, which her writers, her fathers, her Popes, her councils, have sounded from age to age. Not satisfied with placing it at the very summit of the scale of Christian virtue, they contrived the most cruel and insidious of all moral *snares*, in the perpetual vows with which they secured the *profession*, not the observance, of the virtue they extolled. Saint Paul lamented that young widows, after devoting themselves to the service of the church, and living at the expense of her members, grew disorderly, and married, *incurring blame** from the enemies of the Christian name, who scoffed at their fickleness of purpose. Against this evil he provided the most rational remedy—that of receiving no widow to the service of the church, who was not threescore years old. The church of Rome, on the contrary, allures boys and girls of sixteen to bind themselves with perpetual vows: the latter are confined in prisons, because their frailties could not be concealed; the former are let loose upon the people, trusting that a su-

* The word *damnation* is, in its present sense, quite inappropriate in this and several other passages.

perstitious reverence will close the eyes, or seal up the lips of men, on their misconduct. "Christian clemency," says Erasmus, "has, for the most part, abolished the servitude of the ancients, leaving but vestiges of it in a few countries. But under the cloak of religion a new kind of slavery has been invented, which now prevails in a multitude of monasteries. Nothing there is lawful but what is commanded: whatever may accrue to the professed becomes the property of the community: if you stir a foot, you are brought back, as if flying after murdering your father and mother *. The Council of Trent enjoins all bishops to enforce the close confinement of nuns, by every means, and even to engage the assistance of the secular arm for that purpose; entreats all Princes to protect the inclosure of the convents; and threatens instant excommunication on all civil magistrates who withhold their aid when the bishops call for it. "Let no professed nun (say the fathers of the Council of Trent) come out of her monastery under any pretext whatever; not even for

* See the whole dialogue, *Virgo* Μισογαμος, Note H.

a moment." "If any of the regulars (men and women under perpetual vows) pretend that fear or force compelled them to enter the cloister, or that the profession took place before the appointed age; let them not be heard, except within five years of their profession. But if they put off the frock, of their own accord, no allegation of such should be heard; but, being compelled to return to the convent, *they must be punished as apostates*, being, in the mean time, deprived of all the privileges of their order*." Such is the Christian lenity of Rome; such the fences that guard her virgin-plots; such were the laws confirmed at Trent by the wild uproar of six hundred bishops, of whom but few could have cast the first stone at the adulteress, dismissed to sin no more by the Saviour. "Accursed, accursed be all heretics," exclaim the legates: "Accursed, accursed!" answer, with one voice, the mitred tyrants†. The blood, indeed, boils in one's veins, and the mouth fills with re-

* See the laws on this subject, Note I.

† See the *Acclamations* in the last session of the Council of Trent. See also the state of morals among the clergy, according to the avowal of the first legates. Note I.

taliating curses, at the contemplation of that odious scene: yet, I thank God, the feelings of indignation which I cannot wholly suppress, leave me completely free to obey the divine precept respecting those that "curse us, and despitefully use us."

That my feelings are painfully vehement when I dwell upon this subject; that neither the freedom I have enjoyed so many years, nor the last repose of the victims, the remembrance of whom still wrings tears from my eyes, can allay the bitter pangs of my youth; are proofs that my views arise from a real, painful, and protracted experience. Of monks and friars I know comparatively little, because the vague suspicions, of which even the most pious Spanish parents cannot divest themselves, prevented my frequenting the interior of monasteries during boyhood. My own judgment, and the general disgust which the prevailing grossness and vulgarity of the regulars, create in those who daily see them; kept me subsequently away from all friendly intercourse with the cowled tribes: but of the secular clergy, and the amiable life-prisoners of the church of Rome, few, if any, can possess a more intimate knowledge than my-

self. Devoted to the ecclesiastical profession since the age of fifteen, when I received the minor orders, I lived in constant friendship with the most distinguished youths who, in my town, were preparing for the priesthood. Men of the first eminence in the church were the old friends of my family—my parents' and my own spiritual directors. Thus I grew up, thus I continued in manhood, till, at the age of five-and-thirty, religion, and religion alone, tore me away from kindred and country. The intimacy of friendship, the undisguised converse of sacramental confession, opened to me the hearts of many, whose exterior conduct might have deceived a common observer. The coarse frankness of associate dissoluteness, left no secrets among the spiritual slaves, who, unable to separate the laws of God from those of their tyrannical church, trampled both under foot, in riotous despair. Such are the sources of the knowledge I possess: God, sorrow, and remorse, are my witnesses.

A more blameless, ingenuous, religious set of youths than that in the enjoyment of whose friendship I passed the best years of my life, the world

cannot boast of. Eight of us, all nearly of the same age, lived in the closest bond of affection, from sixteen till one-and-twenty; and four, at least, continued in the same intimacy till that of about thirty-five. Of this knot of friends not one was tainted by the breath of gross vice till the church had doomed them to a life of celibacy, and turned the best affections of their hearts into crime. It is the very refinement of church cruelty to say they were free when they deprived themselves of their natural rights. Less, indeed, would be the unfeelingness of a parent who, watching a moment of generous excitement, would deprive a son of his birthright, and doom him, by a voluntary act, to pine away through life in want and misery. A virtuous youth of one-and-twenty, who is made to believe Christian perfection inseparable from a life of celibacy, will easily overlook the dangers which beset that state of life. Those who made, and those who still support the unnatural law, which turns the mistaken piety of youth into a source of future vice; ought to have learnt mercy from their own experience: but a priest who has waded (as most do) through the miry slough of a

life, of incessant temptation—falling, and rising, stumbling, struggling, and falling again, without at once casting off Catholicism with Christianity; contracts, generally, habits of mind not unlike those of the guards of oriental beauty. Their hearts have been seared with envy.

I cannot think on the wanderings of the friends of my youth without heart-rending pain. One, now no more, whose talents raised him to one of the highest dignities of the church of Spain, was for many years a model of Christian purity. When, by the powerful influence of his mind and the warmth of his devotion, this man had drawn many into the clerical, and the religious life (my youngest sister among the latter), he sunk at once into the grossest and most daring profligacy. I heard him boast that the night before the solemn procession of *Corpus Christi*, where he appeared nearly at the head of his chapter, one of *two* children had been born, which his two concubines brought to light within a few days of each other. The intrigues of ambition soon shared his mind with the pursuit of pleasure; and the fall of a potentate, whom he took the trouble to instruct in the policy

of Machiavel, involved him in danger and distress for a time. He had risen again into court influence, when death cut him off in the flower of life. I had loved him when both our minds were pure: I loved him when Catholicism had driven us both from the path of virtue; I still love, and will love his memory, and hope that God's mercy has pardoned his life of sin, without imputing it to the abetters of the barbarous laws which occasioned his spiritual ruin.

Such, more or less, has been the fate of my early friends, whose minds and hearts were much above the common standard of the Spanish clergy. What, then, need I say of the vulgar crowd of priests, who, coming, as the Spanish phrase has it, from *coarse swaddling clothes*, and raised by ordination to a rank of life for which they have not been prepared; mingle vice and superstition, grossness of feeling, and pride of office, in their character? I have known the best among them: I have heard their confessions; I have heard the confessions of young persons of both sexes, who fell under the influence of their suggestions and example; and I do declare that nothing can be more

dangerous to youthful virtue than their company. How many souls would be saved from crime, but for the vain display of pretended superior virtue, which Rome demands of her clergy!

The cares of a married life, it is said, interfere with the duties of the clergy. Do not the cares of a vicious life, the anxieties of stolen love, the contrivances of adulterous intercourse, the pains, the jealousies, the remorse, attached to a conduct in perfect contradiction with a public and solemn profession of superior virtue—do not these cares, these bitter feelings, interfere with the duties of priesthood? I have seen the most promising men of my university obtain country vicarages, with characters unimpeached, and hearts overflowing with hopes of usefulness. A virtuous wife would have confirmed and strengthened their purposes; but they were to live a life of angels in celibacy. They were, however, men, and their duties connected them with beings of no higher description. Young women knelt before them, in all the intimacy and openness of confession. A solitary house made them go abroad in search of social converse. Love, long resisted, seized them, at length, like

madness. Two I knew who died insane: hundreds might be found who avoid that fate by a life of settled systematic vice.

The picture of female convents requires a more delicate pencil: yet I cannot find tints sufficiently dark and gloomy to pourtray the miseries which I have witnessed in their inmates. Crime, indeed, makes its way into those recesses, in spite of the spiked walls and prison grates, which protect the inhabitants. This I know with all the certainty which the self-accusation of the guilty can give. It is, besides, a notorious fact, that the nunneries in Estremadura and Portugal are frequently infected with vice of the grossest kind. But I will not dwell on this revolting part of the picture. The greater part of the nuns, whom I have known, were beings of a much higher description—females whose purity owed nothing to the strong gates and high walls of the cloister; but who still had a human heart, and felt, in many instances, and during a great portion of their lives, the weight of the vows which had deprived them of their liberty. Some there are, I confess, among the nuns, who, like birds hatched in a cage, never seem

to long for freedom: but the happiness boasted of in convents, is generally the effect of an honourable pride of purpose, supported by a sense of utter hopelessness. The gates of the holy prison have been for ever closed upon the professed inhabitants; force and shame await them wherever they might fly: the short words of their profession have, like a potent charm, bound them to one spot of earth, and fixed their dwelling upon their grave. The great poet who boasted that "slaves cannot live in England," forgot that superstition may baffle the most sacred laws of freedom: slaves *do live* in England, and, I fear, multiply daily by the same arts which fill the convents abroad. In vain does the law of the land stretch a friendly hand to the repentant victim: the unhappy slave may be dying to break her fetters; yet death would be preferable to the shame and reproach that await her among relatives and friends. It will not avail her to keep the vow which dooms her to live single: she has renounced her will, and made herself a passive mass of clay in the hands of a superior. Perhaps she has promised to practise austerities which cannot be performed out of

the convent—never to taste meat, if her life were to depend on the use of substantial food—to wear no linen—to go unhosed and unshod for life;—all these and many other hardships make part of the various rules which Rome has confirmed with her sanction. Bitter harassing remorse seizes the wavering mind of the recluse, and even a yielding thought towards liberty, assumes the character of sacrilege. Nothing short of rebellion against the church that has burnt the mark of slavery into her soul, can liberate an English nun. Whereto could she turn her eyes? Her own parents would disown her; her friends would shrink from her as if her breath wafted leprosy: she would be haunted by priests and their zealous emissaries; and, like her sister victims of superstition in India, be made to die of a broken heart, if she refused to return to the burning pile from which she had fled in frantic fear.

Suppose that the case I have described were of the rarest occurrence: suppose that but one nun in ten thousand wished vehemently for that liberty which she had forfeited, by a few words, in one moment: what law of God (I will ask) has en-

titled the Roman church thus to expose even one human creature to dark despair in this life, and a darker prospect in the next? Has the Gospel recommended perpetual vows? Could any thing but a clear and positive injunction of Christ or his apostles justify a practice beset with dangers of this magnitude? Is not the mere *possibility* of repenting such vows a reason why they should be strictly forbidden? And yet they are laid on almost infants of both sexes. Innocent girls of sixteen are lured by the image of heroic virtue, and a pretended call of their Saviour, to promise they know not what, and make engagements for a whole life of which they have seen but the dawn!

To what paltry shifts and quibbles will not Roman Catholic writers resort to disguise the cruelty of this practice! Nuns are described as superhuman beings, as angels on earth, without a thought or wish beyond the walls of their convents. The effects of habit, of religious fear, of decorum, which prevented many of the French nuns from casting off the veil, at a period when the revolutionary storm had struck awe into every breast; are construed into a proof of the unvariableness

of purpose which follows the religious profession. Are nuns, indeed, so invariably happy? Why, then, are they insulted by their spiritual rulers by keeping them under the very guards and precautions, which magistrates employ to secure external good behaviour among the female inmates of prisons and penitentiaries?—Would the nuns continue, during their lives, under the same privations, were they at liberty to resume the laical state? Why, then, are they bound fast with awful vows? Why are they not allowed to offer up, day by day, the free-will offering of their souls and bodies?

The reluctant nuns, you say, are few.—Vain, unfeeling sophistry! First prove that vows are recommended on divine authority, that Christ has authorized the use of force and compulsion to ratify them when they are made; and then you may stop your ears against the complaints of a few sufferers. But can millions of submissive, or even willing recluses, atone for the despair of those few? You reckon, in indefinite numbers, those that in France did not avail themselves of the revolutionary laws. You should rather inquire

how many, who, before the revolution, appeared perfectly contented in their cloistral slavery, overcame every religious fear, and flew into the arms of a husband as soon as they could do it with impunity. *Two hundred and ten nuns* were secularized in Spain during the short-lived reign of the Cortes *. Were these helpless beings happy in their former durance? What an appalling number of less fortunate victims might not be made out by averaging, in the same proportion, the millions of females who, since the establishment of convents, have surrendered their liberty into the hands of Rome!

Cruel and barbarous, indeed, must be the bigotry or the policy which, rather than yield on a point of discipline, sees with indifference even the chance, not to say the existence, of such evils. To place the most sensitive, innocent, and ardent minds under the most horrible apprehensions of spiritual and temporal punishment, without the clearest necessity; is a refinement of cruelty which has few examples among civilized nations. Yet

* Report of the minister Garelli, laid before the Cortes, 1st of March, 1822.

the scandal of defection is guarded against by fears that would crush stouter hearts, and distract less vivid imaginations, than those of timid and sensitive females. Even a temporary leave to quit the convent for the restoration of decaying health is seldom given, and never applied for but by such nuns as unhappiness drives into a disregard of public opinion. I saw my eldest sister, at the age of two-and-twenty, slowly sink into the grave within the walls of a convent; whereas, had she not been a slave to that church which has been a curse to me; air, amusement, and exercise might have saved her. I saw her on her deathbed. I obtained that melancholy sight at the risk of bursting my heart, when, in my capacity of priest, and at her own request, I heard her last confession. Ah! when shall I forget the mortal agony with which; not to disturb the dying moments of that truly angelic being, I suppressed my gushing tears in her presence; the choking sensation with which I forced the words of absolution through my convulsed lips; the faltering steps with which I left the convent

alone, making the solitary street where it stood re-echo the sobs I could no longer contain!

I saw my dear sister no more; but another was left me, if not equal in talents to the eldest (for I have known few that could be considered her equals), amiable and good in no inferior degree. To her I looked up as a companion for life. But she had a heart open to every noble impression—and such, among Catholics, are apt to be misled from the path of practical usefulness, into the wilderness of visionary perfection. At the age of twenty she left an infirm mother to the care of servants and strangers, and shut herself up in a convent, where she was not allowed to see even the nearest relations. With a delicate frame, requiring every indulgence to support it in health, she embraced a rule which denied her the comforts of the lowest class of society. A coarse woollen frock fretted her skin; her feet had no covering but that of shoes open at the toes, that they might expose them to the cold of a brick floor; a couch of bare planks was her bed, and an unfurnished cell her dwelling. Disease soon

filled her conscience with fears; and I had often to endure the torture of witnessing her agonies at the confessional. I left her, when I quitted Spain, dying much too slowly for her only chance of relief. I wept bitterly for her loss two years after; yet I could not be so cruel as to wish her alive.

LETTER VI.

Rome the enemy of mental improvement: the direct tendency of her Prayer-book, the Breviary, to cherish credulity and adulterate Christian virtue.

I COULD not connect the subject of my preceding Letter with any other, without doing the greatest violence to the overpowering feelings which the recollection of celibacy and monachism, never fail to raise in me. I now proceed to show the natural opposition which exists between the spiritual power assumed by the church of Rome, and the improvement of the human understanding. After this I shall close my subject with numerous proofs of her disregard of truth, in the dissemination of a timid, superstitious, and credulous spirit, the best security of her influence among mankind.

The long list of illustrious writers, members of the Roman Catholic communion, with which the first part of my charge will be met, is well known to me. I would allow that list to be doubled: I

would grant every one of your boasted authors the whole weight of learning and abilities which you allot to them by your own scale of merit; yet it would remain to be proved, that vigour of mind and comprehensiveness of knowledge were, in such instances, attained in accordance with the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, and not, as I am ready to show, in the very teeth of its spirit. The resources of the human mind, when once in motion after knowledge, are innumerable. Fear and restraint may force it into devious and crooked paths, not without injury to its moral qualities; but no power on earth can prevent the exertion of its activity.

It is curious to observe the invariable accuracy with which certain principles, true or false, will work; and how perfectly analogous their effects will be when applied to the most different objects. We see the assumption of supernatural infallibility, gradually leading the popes to attempt the subjection of all Christian powers. A criminal ambition might often mix in their political plans and views; but the impulse which threatened the thrones of Europe, was independent of the in-

dividual temper of the popes. The mildest, humblest individual, believing himself an infallible guide to salvation, must have considered the removal of every obstacle to that paramount object, a part, not only of his privilege, but his duty. He would, therefore, strive to reduce all human power, so as to suit his views of spiritual rule. The declaration that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, would not prevent a conscientious Pope from checking any temporal power, which he conceived to oppose the interests of the next. On the same grounds, and from the very same principle, has Rome been, at all times, the declared enemy of mental independence. She, it is true, confines her *open* claims, in this case, to points of Christian faith, as to *spiritual* supremacy in the former. But remove opposition in both, and you will see her become as great a tyrant over the human intellect, as she was at one time over the governments of Christendom. There is, in fact, a greater connexion between the learned and scientific opinions of men and their religious tenets, than between moral practice and civil allegiance. Hence the rights of the Roman Catholic

church to prescribe limits to the mind are still openly contended for, while the indirect dominion of the popes over Christian kings and their people, is only timidly whispered within the walls of the Vatican.

But how does it happen that Italy and France have produced men of extraordinary eminence, notwithstanding their mental subjection to Rome? —I might answer this question by another: How is it that the talent of Spain and Portugal has been rendered abortive?—The *tendency* of moral as well as physical agents must be estimated, not by that which they fail to affect, but by the condition of what is fairly submitted to their action. Will you have an adequate notion of the fetters laid by Rome upon the human mind? examine the intellect of such as wear them really, not ostensibly. Would you ascertain the true practical consequences of any law? observe its results, where it is not eluded. The Roman Catholic restraints on the understanding, have been and are still actively enforced in Spain; whereas the weakness of the papal government has never been able to put the Italian inquisitions into full activity.

France was always free from that scourge; and the confinement of a few authors to the Bastille, was a poor substitute for the *Autos-da-Fe* of the unfortunate Spanish Peninsula.

But has not the influence of Roman Catholic infallibility, even in those less oppressed countries, disturbed the best efforts of the human intellect, closed up many of the direct roads to knowledge, and forced ingenuity to skulk in the pursuit of it like a thief? Sound the antiquarian, the astronomer, the natural philosopher of Italy; and the characteristic shrug of their shoulders will soon tell you that they have gone the full stretch of the chain they are forced to wear. What if the chain be already snapt at every link, and kept together by threads? Reckon, if you can, the struggles, the sighs, the artifices, the perjuries which have brought it to that state. Look at Galileo on his knees: see the commentators of Newton prefixing a declaration to his immortal *Principia*, in which, by a solemn falsehood, they avoid the fate of the unhappy Florentine astronomer. "Newton," say the great mathematicians, Le Seur and Jacquier, "assumes, in his third book, the hypothesis of the earth's

motion. The propositions of that author could not be explained except through the same hypothesis. We have, therefore, been forced to act a character not our own. But we declare our submission to the decrees of the Roman pontiffs against the motion of the earth *." The same sacrifice of sincerity is required at the Spanish universities. Science, indeed, has scarcely ever made a step without bowing, with a lie in her mouth, to Roman infallibility. Mankind has to thank Lord Bacon, as he might thank the intellectual liberty which the Reformation allowed him, for that burst of light which at once broke out from his writings, and spread the seeds of true knowledge, too thick and wide for Rome to smother them. She had been able, at former periods, to decide the fate of philosophical systems according as they appeared to favour or oppose her notions.

* Newtonus, in hoc tertio libro, telluris motæ hypothesim assumit. Autoris propositiones aliter explicari non poterant, nisi eâdem quoque facta hypothesi. Hinc alienam coacti sumus gerere personam. Cæterum latis a summis pontificibus contra telluris motum decretis, nos obsequi profitemur.—Newtoni Principia, vol. III. Coloniæ Allobrogum, 1760. This declaration was made in 1742.

In this case, however, she was both unable to perceive the extent of her danger, and to check the simultaneous impulse of the awakened mind of Europe. The Council of Trent, however, had, a short time before, done every thing in its power, to keep mankind in subjection to the church upon every branch of knowledge. By a solemn decree of that Council, the press was subjected to the previous censure of the bishops or the inquisitors in every part of Christendom. It is not difficult to conceive the use which these holy umpires of knowledge, would make of their authority to check and subdue the *petulant minds**, who dared to broach any thing which jarred with the principles of school philosophy or divinity. But we need not leave this to conjecture: the censures attached to the long list of books condemned in the *Index Expurgatorius* of Rome, accurately describe the extent of intellectual freedom, which Rome grants to the faithful subjects of her spiritual empire.

The fact that both popes and bishops of the

* *Ad coercenda petulantia ingenia.*—The Council of Trent confirmed the decree of the Council of Lateran, which extends the censure to all kinds of books.

Roman Catholic communion have often patronized knowledge, is anxiously brought forward to prove the existence of a liberal and enlightened spirit in the Roman church. Now, if the conduct of individuals were admitted as a criterion of the temper of their church, it would be easy to produce thousands who have opposed real knowledge for every one that has promoted its interests *. Besides, a pope may be a patron of the fine arts, and a determined enemy to philosophical studies. A cardinal or a bishop may spend his savings and fortune in the erection of a college, with a view to perpetuate the metaphysics of the thirteenth century. Such will be found to be the benefactions which learning has generally received from the members of the church of Rome. It is true we owe the preservation of manuscripts to the monks, though it would be difficult to enumerate the multitude of works which were destroyed by their sloth and ignorance. The public schools of Europe were endowed by the liberality of Roman Catholics; but if either those that preserved the treasures of ancient literature, or those

* Note K.

who founded our universities, had suspected the direction which the human mind would take from the excitement of these mental stimuli; they would have doomed poets, orators, and philosophers to the flames, and flung their endowing money into the sea. I do not blame individuals for partaking the spirit of their age, but protest against a church which, having attained the fulness of strength under the influence of the most ignorant ages, would, for the sake of that strength, stop the progress of time, and reduce the nineteenth century to the intellectual standard of the thirteenth*. Moral as well as physical beings must love their native atmosphere; and Rome being no exception to this law, is still daily employed in renovating and spreading credulity, enthusiasm, and superstition—the elements in which she thrives. The

* The inveterate enmity of a sincere Roman Catholic against books which directly or indirectly dissent from his church, is unconquerable. There is a family in England who, having inherited a copious library under circumstances which make it a kind of heir-loom, have torn out every leaf of the Protestant works, leaving nothing in the shelves but the covers. This fact I know from the most unquestionable authority.

charge is strong, and expressed in strong language; but, I believe, not stronger than the following proofs will warrant.

A Christian church cannot employ a more effectual instrument to fashion and mould the minds of her members, than the form of prayer and worship which she sanctions for daily use. Such is the *Breviary*, or Prayer-book of the Roman Catholic clergy, which, as it stands in the present day, is the most-authentic work of that kind. In consequence of a decree of the Council of Trent, Pope Pius V. ordered a number of *learned and able* men to compile the *Breviary*, and by his bull, *Quod a nobis*, July, 1566, sanctioned it, and commanded the use thereof to the clergy of the Roman Catholic church, all over the world. Clement VIII., in 1602, finding that the Breviary of Pius V. had been altered and depraved; restored it to its pristine state, and ordered, under pain of excommunication, that all future editions should strictly follow that which he then printed at the Vatican. Lastly, Urban VIII., in 1631, had the language of the whole work, and the metres of the hymns, revised. The value which the church of

Rome sets upon the Breviary, may be known from the strictness with which she demands the perusal of it. Whoever enjoys any ecclesiastical revenue; all persons of both sexes who have professed in any of the regular orders*; all subdeacons, deacons and priests, are bound to repeat, either in public or private, the whole service of the day, out of the Breviary. The omission of any one of the eight portions of which that service consists, is declared to be a mortal sin, *i. e.* a sin that, unrepented, would be sufficient to exclude from salvation. The person guilty of such an omission, loses all legal right to whatever portion of his clerical emoluments is due for the day or days wherein he neglected that duty, and cannot be absolved till he has given the forfeited sums to the poor, or redeemed the greatest part by a certain donation to the Spanish crusade. Such are the sanctions and penalties by which the reading of the Breviary is enforced. The scrupulous exactness with which this duty is performed by all who have not secretly

* Some orders have a peculiar Breviary, with the approbation of the pope. There is no substantial difference between these monkish prayer-books and the *Breviary*, which is used by the great body of Roman Catholic clergy.

cast off their spiritual allegiance, is quite surprising. For more than twelve years of my life, at a period when my university studies required uninterrupted attention, I believed myself bound to repeat the appointed prayers and lessons; a task which, in spite of a rapid enunciation, took up an hour and a half daily. A dispensation of this duty is not to be obtained from Rome without the utmost difficulty*. I never, indeed, knew or heard of any one who had obtained it.

The Breviary, therefore, must be reckoned the true standard to which the church of Rome wishes to reduce the minds and hearts of her clergy, from the highest dignitary to the most obscure priest. It is in the Breviary that we may be sure to find the full extent of the *pious* belief, to which she trains the pastors of her flock; and the true stamp of those virtues which she boasts of in her models of Christian perfection. By making the daily repetition of the Breviary a

* Among the many charges made in the name of the Pope by Cardinal Gonsalvi, against Baron von Wessenberg, Vicar General of Constance, is, that he had granted dispensations of this kind, to many clergymen in his diocese. This curious correspondence was published in London, by Ackermann, in 1819. It deserves the attention of such as wish to ascertain the temper of the court of Rome in our own days.

paramount duty of the clergy, Rome evidently gives it the preference over all other works; and as far as she is concerned, provided the appointed teachers of her laity read her own book, they may trouble themselves very little about others. Nay, should a Roman Catholic clergyman, as is often the case, be unable to devote more than an hour and a half a day, to reading; his church places him under the necessity of deriving his whole knowledge from the Breviary.

Precious, indeed, must be the contents of that privileged volume, if we trust the authority which so decidedly enforces its perusal. There was a time when I knew it by heart; but long neglect of that store of knowledge, had lately left but faint traces of the most exquisite passages contained therein. The present occasion, however, has forced me to take my old task-book in hand; and it shall now be my endeavour to arrange and condense the copious extracts made in my last revision.

The office of the Roman Catholic church was originally so contrived as to divide the Psaltery between the seven days of the week. Portions of the Old Scriptures were also read alternately with

extracts from the legends of the saints, and the works of the fathers. But as the calendar became crowded with saints, whose festivals take precedence of the regular church service; little room is left for any thing but a few psalms, which are constantly repeated, a very small part of the Old Testament, and mere fragments of the Gospels and Epistles. The great and never-ending variety consists in the compendious lives of the saints, of which I will here give some specimens.

In the first place, I shall speak of the early martyrs, the spurious records of whose sufferings have been made to contribute most copiously to the composition of the Breviary. The variety and ingenuity of the tortures described, are only equalled by the innumerable miracles which baffled the tyrants, whenever they attempted to injure the Christians by any method but cutting their throats. Houses were set on fire to burn the martyrs within; but the Breviary informs us that the flames raged for a whole day and a night without molesting them. Often do we hear of

idols tumbling from their pedestals at the approach of the persecuted Christians; and even the judges themselves dropt dead when they attempted to pass sentence. The wild beasts seldom devour a martyr without prostrating themselves before him; and lions follow young virgins to protect them from insult. The sea refuses to drown those who are committed to its waters; and when compelled to do that odious service, the waves generally convey the dead bodies where the Christians may preserve them as relics. On one occasion a pope is thrown into the Lake Mœotis, with an anchor which the cautious infidels had tied round his neck, for fear of the usual miraculous floating: the plan succeeded, and the pope was drowned. But the sea was soon after observed to recede three miles from the shore, where a temple appeared, in which the body of the martyr had been provided with a marble sarcophagus*.

* "Clemens...a Trajano imperatore relegatus est trans Mare Ponticum in solitudinem urbis Chersonæ, in qua duo millia Christianorum reperit... qui cum in eruendis et secandis marmoribus aquæ penuria laborarent, Clemens facta oratione in vicinum collem ascendit; in cujus jugo vidit Agnum dextro

There is a good deal of romantic interest in the history of Cyprian and Justina. The former being a heathen magician, who to that detestable art joined a still more infamous occupation; engaged to put a young man in possession of Justina, a Christian virgin. For this purpose he employed the most potent incantations, till the devil was forced to confess that he had no power over Christians. Upon this, Cyprian very sensibly concluded, that it was better to be a Christian than a sorcerer. The readers of romance may, after this, expect every sort of incident except a marriage, which none but inferior saints ever contract; and from which all must extricate themselves before they can be in a fair way of obtaining a place in the calendar. Cyprian and Justina being accused be-

pede fontem aquæ dulcis, qui inde scaturiebat attingentem, ubi omnes sitim expleverunt; eoque miraculo multi infideles ad Christi fidem conversi, Clementis etiam sanctitatem venerare cœperunt: quibus concitatus Trajanus, misit illuc qui Clementem, alligatâ ad ejus collum anchorâ, in profundum dejicerent. Quod cum factum esset, Christianis ad littus orantibus, mare ad tria milliaria recessit; eòque illi accedentes, ædiculam marmoream in templi formam, et intus arcam lapideam, ubi Martyris corpus conditum erat, et, juxta illud, anchoram quâ mersus fuerat, invenerunt."

fore the Roman judge, are, however, fried together in a caldron of melted "pitch, fat, and wax," from which they come out quite able to be carried to Nicomedia, where they are put to death by the almost infallible means of the sword or the axe. I say *almost*; because I find an instance where even this method had nearly disappointed the persecutors. That happened in the case of St. Cecilia. This saint, of musical celebrity, having been forced to marry a certain Valerius, cautioned most earnestly her bridegroom to avert from himself the vengeance of an angel who had the charge of her purity. The good-natured Valerius agreed to forego his rights, provided he was allowed to see his heavenly rival; and for this purpose submitted to be baptized. After the ceremony the angel showed himself to Valerius, and subsequently to a brother of his, who had been let into the secret. This Cecilia is the martyr on whom, as I mentioned before, a whole house flaming about her for a natural day, had not the smallest effect. Even when the axe was employed, the lictor exerted his strength in vain on the delicate neck of his victim, which being but half divided, yet

allowed her miraculously to live for three days more, at the end of which she fairly died*.

* "Cyprianus, primum magus, postea martyr cùm Justinam Christianum virginem, quam juvenis quidem ardenter amabat, cantionibus ac veneficiis ad ejus libidinis assensum allicere conaretur, dæmonem consuluit, quânam id re consequi posset. Cui dæmon respondit, nullam illi artem processuram adversus eos, qui vere Christum colerent. Quo responso commotus Cyprianus, vehementer dolere cœpit vitæ superioris institutum Itaque relictis magicis artibus, se totum ad Christi domini fidem convertit. Quam ob causam unâ cum virgine Justina comprehensus est, et ambo colaphis flagellisque cæsi, mox in carcerem conjecti ... in sartaginem plenam fervèntis picis, adipis et ceræ injecti sunt. Demum Nicomediæ securi feriuntur.

"Cæcilia virgo Romana, nobili genere nata, a prima ætate Christianæ fidei præceptis instituta, virginitatem suam Deo vovit. Sed cum postea contra suam voluntatem data esset in matrimonium Valeriano, primâ nuptiarum nocte hunc cum eo sermonem habuit: Ego Valeriane, in Angeli tutelâ sum, qui virginitatem meum custodit: quare ne quid in me committas, quo ira Dei in te concitetur. Quibus verbis commotus Valerianus, illam attingere non est ausus: quin etiam addidit, se in Christum crediturum, si eum Angelum videret. Cui Cæcilia cum sine baptismo negaret id fieri posse, incensus cupiditate videndi Angelum, se baptizari velle respondet ... (Baptizatus, et) ad Cæciliam reversus, orantem et cum ea Angelum divino splendore fulgentem, invenit. Quo aspectu obstupefactus, ut primum ex timore confirmatus est, Tiburtium fratrem suum accersit qui a Cæcilia Christi fide imbutus ... ipse etiam ejusdem Angeli quem frater ejus viderat, aspectu dignatus est. Uterque autem paulo post Almachio

After the romantic miracles of the early martyrs, I have to mention the stories by which the Breviary endeavours to support the extravagant veneration for the Popes and their see, which at all times has been the leading aim of the Roman court. The most notorious forgeries are, for this purpose, sanctioned and consecrated in her Prayer Book. That these legends are often given in the words of those whom the church of Rome calls *fathers*, shows the weakness both of the Popish structure, and of the props that support it. We thus find the fable about the contest between St. Peter and Simon Magus, before Nero, gravely repeated in the words of St. Maximus. "The holy apostles (Peter and Paul) lost their lives, he says, because, among other miracles, they also, by their prayers, precipitated Simon from the vacuity of the air. For Simon calling himself Christ, and engaging to ascend to the

Præfecto, constanter martyrium subit. Qui mox Cæciliam comprehendi imperat... eamque in ipsius ædes reductam, in balneo comburi *jussit*. Quo in loco cum diem noctemque ita fuisset, ut ne flamma quidem illam attingeret; eo immissus est carnifex, qui ter securi ictam, cum caput abscindere non potuisset, semivivam reliquit," &c. &c.

Father, was suddenly raised in flight, by means of his magic art. At this moment Peter, bending his knees, prayed to the Lord, and by his holy prayer defeated the magician's lightness; for the prayer reached the Lord sooner than the flight; the right petition outstripped the unjust presumption. Peter, on earth, obtained what he asked, much before Simon could reach the heavens to which he was making his way. Peter, therefore, brought down his rival from the air as if he had held him by a rope, and dashing him against a stone, in a precipice, broke his legs: doing this in scorn of the fact itself, so that he who but a moment before, had attempted to fly, should not now be able to walk; and having affected wings, should want the use of his heels*."

* "Hodierna igitur die beati Apostoli sanguinem profuderunt. Sed videamus causam quare ista perpessi sunt; scilicet, quod inter cætera mirabilia etiam magum illum Simonem orationibus suis de aeris vacuo præcipiti ruina prostraverunt. Cum enim idem Simon se Christum dicerit, et tanquam filium ad patrem assereret volando se posse conscendere, atque elatus subitò magicis artibus volare cœpisset; tunc Petrus fixis genibus precatus est Dominum, et precatione sancta vicit magicam levitatem. Prior enim ascendit ad Dominum oratio quàm volatus; et ante pervenit justa petitio, quam iniqua præ-

The use which the Breviary makes of the forged epistles of the early Popes, known by the name of false Decretals, is frequently obvious to those who are acquainted with both. As these Decretals were forged about the eighth century, with a view to magnify the power of the Roman see, nothing in their contents is more prominent than that object. The Breviary, therefore, never omits an opportunity of establishing the Papal supremacy by tacit reference to these spurious documents. Yet as this would have but a slight effect upon the mass of the faithful, a more picturesque story is related in the life of Pope St. John.

His Holiness being on a journey to Corinth, and in want of a quiet and comfortable horse, borrowed one, which the lady of a certain nobleman used to ride. The animal carried the Pope

sumptio; ante Petrus in terris positus obtinuit quod petebat, quàm Simon perveniret in cœlestibus, quò tendebat. Tunc igitur Petrus velut vinctum illum de sublimi aere deposuit, et quodam præcipitio in saxo elidens, ejus crura confregit; et hoc in opprobrio facti illius, ut qui paulo ante volare tentaverat, subito ambulare non posset; et qui pennas assumpserat, plantas amitteret." Septima die infra Octavam SS. Apost. Petri et Pauli.

with the greatest ease and docility; and, when the journey was over, was returned to his mistress; but in vain did she attempt to enjoy the accustomed services of her favourite. The horse had become fierce, and gave the lady many an unseemly fall: "as if (says the authorised record) feeling indignant at having to carry a woman, since the Vicar of Christ had been on his back *." The horse was accordingly presented to the Pope, as unfit to be ridden by a less dignified personage.

The standing miracles of the city of Rome; those

* "Cum ei nobilis vir ad Corinthum, equum, quo ejus uxor mansueto utebatur, itineris causâ commodasset; factum est ut Domino posteâ remissus equus ita ferox evaderet, ut fremitu, et totius corporis agitatione, semper deinceps dominam expulerit: tanquam indignaretur mulierem recipere ex quo sedisset in eo Christi vicarius." Brev. Rom. die 27 Maii.

The Breviary, true to its plan of giving the substance of every story that ever sprang from the fertile imagination of the idle monks, concludes the life by stating the vision of *a certain hermit*, who saw the soul of Theodoric the Goth, carried to hell by Pope John and Symmachus, through one of the volcanos of the Lipari Islands. "Paulo post moritur Theodoricus: quem quidam eremita, ut scribit Sanctus Gregorius, vidit inter Joannem Pontificem, et Symmachum Patricium, quem idem occiderat, demergi in ignem Liparitanum."—"This legend (says Gibbon) is related by Gregory I. and approved by Baronius; and both the Pope and Cardinal are grave doctors, sufficient to establish *a probable* opinion." Chap. xxxix. Note 108.

miraculous relics which even at this moment are drawing crowds of pilgrims within its walls, and which, in former times, made the whole of Europe support the idleness of the Romans at the expense of their devout curiosity; are not overlooked in the prayer-book of her church. Let me mention the account it gives of St. Peter's chains, such as they are now venerated at Rome. Eudoxia, the wife of Theodosius the younger, being on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, received as a present the chains with which St. Peter was bound in prison, when he was liberated by an angel. This chain, set with jewels, was forwarded by the pious empress to her daughter, then at Rome. The young princess, rejoiced with the gift, showed the chain to the Pope, who repaid the compliment by exhibiting another chain, which the holy apostle had borne under Nero. As, to compare their structure, the two chains were brought into contact, the links at the extremities of each joined together, and the two pieces became one uniform chain*.

* "Cum igitur Pontifex Romanam catenam cum ea, quæ Ierosolymis allata fuerat, contulisset, factum est, ut illæ inter se sic connecterentur ut non duæ sed una catena ab

After these samples, no one will be surprised to find in the same authorised record, all the other supposed miracles which, in different parts of Italy, move daily the enlightened traveller to laughter or disgust. The translation of the house of Loretto from Palestine to the Papal States, is asserted in the collect for that festival; which being a direct address to the Deity, cannot be supposed to have been carelessly compiled *. The

eodem artifice confecta, esse videretur." In Festo St. Petri ad Vincula.—The present Pope mentions this chain as one of the inducements for the faithful to visit Rome this year of Jubilee. See the translation of the Proclamation, Note L.

* "Deus, qui beatæ Mariæ Virginis domum per incarnati Verbi mysterium misericorditer consecrasti, *eamque in sinu ecclesia tuæ mirabiliter collocasti*," &c. &c. The account of the pretended miraculous conveyance of the house by the hands of the angels is given in the lessons: "Ipsius autem Virginis natalis domus divinis mysteriis consecrata, Angelorum ministerio ab Infidelium potestate, in Dalmatiam prius, deinde in Agrum Lauretanum Picenæ Provinciæ translata fuit, sedente sancto Cœlestino quinto: eandemque ipsam esse in qua Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis, tum Pontificis diplomatibus, et celeberrima totius Orbis veneratione, tum continuâ miraculorum virtute, et cœlestium beneficiorum gratiâ, comprobatur. Quibus permotus Innocentius Duodecimus, quò ferventius erga Matris amantissimæ cultum Fidelium memoria excitaretur, ejusdem Sanctæ Domus Translationem anniversariâ solemnitate in tota Piceni Provincia veneratam, Missa etiam et Officio proprio celebrari præcepit."

two removals of that house by the hands of angels, first to the coast of Dalmatia, and thence, over the Adriatic, to the opposite shore, are gravely related in the Lessons; where the members of the Roman Catholic church are reminded that the identity of the house is warranted by papal bulls, and a *proper* mass and service published by the same authority for the annual commemoration of that event.

It is rather curious to observe the difference in the assertion of Italian and of French miracles: the unhesitating confidence with which the former are stated, the hypercritical jealousy which appears in the narrative of the latter. The walk of St. Dionysius, with his own head in his hands, from Paris to the site of the present abbey of St. Denis, is given only as a credible *report*. "De quo illud *memoriæ proditum est*, abscissum suum caput sustulisse, et progressum ad duo millia passuum in manibus gestasse*." The French,

* The Breviary, however, does not betray such hesitation as to the works of the said Dionysius, the Areopagite—the most barefaced forgery which ever was foisted on the credulity of the world. *Libros scripsit admirabiles, ac planè cœlestes, de divinis nominibus, de cœlesti et Ecclesiastica Hierarchia, de mystica Theologia, et alios quosdam.*

indeed, with their liberties of the Gallican church, have never been favourites at Rome; but all is certainty in the accounts of Italian worthies. Witness the renowned St. Januarius, whose extraordinary miracles, both during his life under Diocletian, and in our own days, are stated with equal confidence and precision. That saint, we are told, being thrown into a burning furnace, came out so perfectly unhurt, that not even his clothes or hair were singed. The next day all the wild beasts in the amphitheatre came crouching to his feet. I pass over the other ancient performances of Januarius, to show the style in which his wonderful works, after death, are given. His body, for instance, on one occasion, extinguished the flames of Vesuvius*. This is no miracle upon

* "In ardentem fornacem conjectus ita illæsus evasit ut ne vestimentum aut capillum quidem flamma violaverit.—(Feræ) naturalis feritatis oblitæ, ad Januarii pedes se prostravere.—In primis memorandum quod erumpentes olim e monte Vesuvio flammarum globos, nec vicinis modo, sed longinquis etiam regionibus vastitatis metum afferentes, extinxit.—Præclarum illud quoque, quod ejus sanguis, qui in ampulla vitrea concretus asservatur, cum in conspectu capitis ejusdem martyris ponitur, admirandum in modum colliquefieri, et ebullire, perinde atque recens effusus, ad hæc usque tempora cernitur."

vague report, but one which, according to the Breviary, deserves a peculiar remembrance. Next comes that "noble miracle"—*præclarum illud*—the liquefaction of Januarius's blood, which takes place every year in Naples. The usual state of the blood, as a coagulated mass, and its change into a bubbling fluid, are circumstantially described, as might be expected, from historians, who convey the most minute information, even about the clothes and hair of a martyr that died fifteen hundred years ago. The liquefaction, indeed, with all its circumstances, they must have witnessed themselves, or derived their information concerning it from thousands of Neapolitan witnesses.

And here let me observe by the way, the extraordinary liberality of his church upon these points, which Mr. Butler sets forth to the admiration of the world. "A person," he tells us, "may disbelieve every other miracle (except those which are related in the Old or the New Testament), and may even disbelieve the existence of the persons through whose intercession they are related to have been wrought, without ceasing to

be a Roman Catholic*." We must, however, exempt from this very ample privilege those who thus solemnly publish the miracles themselves, or their honesty would certainly be placed in a strange predicament. Still, by a stronger reason, we must suppose them perfectly convinced of the reality of that annual wonder, which for ages has been repeated under their eyes. How, then, can they be so insensible to the forlorn condition of heretics and unbelievers, as not to allow a close inspection of that undeniable proof of the Roman Catholic faith? The present Pope invites us to see the manger where the infant Saviour lay at Bethlehem. Would it not be more charitable to allow one of our chemists to view the blood of St. Januarius, and observe its change,—not surrounded by priests, candles, and the smoke of frankincense, —and thus convert us all at one stroke?

The world is full of Roman Catholic miracles, in the incorrupt bodies of saints, which lie on the altars, inclosed in gold and silver cases. I have often performed high mass before that of St.

* Book of the Roman Catholic Church, p. 46.

Ferdinand, which is preserved in the royal chapel at Seville; and, though a member of the chapter to whose charge the Spanish kings have intrusted their holy ancestor, I could never obtain a distinct view of the body, which the church of Rome declares to be incorrupt*. On certain days the front of a massive silver sarcophagus is removed, when a gold and glass chest is seen, containing something like a man covered with splendid robes. But the multitude of candles on the altar, and the want of light from behind, prevent a distinct view of the objects within. Once, when the multitude was thronging the chapel, a lady of high rank, who had applied to me for a closer view than was allowed to the crowd, was furnished with a stool to stand upon a level with the body. To gratify at once her and my own curiosity, I took a candle from the altar, and endeavoured to counteract the reflection of the glass, by throwing in the light obliquely. One of our inferior clergy, the sacristan, whose duty it was to stand near the

* "Jacet ejus corpus incorruptum adhuc post quatuor sæcula in templo maximo Hispalensi, honorificentissimo inclusum sepulchro." Breviarum Rom. in festo Sancti Ferdinandi.

saint in his surplice, seeing what I was about, snatched the candle from my hand, with a rudeness which nothing but his half roguish, half holy zeal, could have prompted. He pretended to be alarmed for the pane of glass; but I more than suspect that he knew the incorruptibility of the saint could not bear inspection. The head, which I distinctly saw, was a mere skull, with something like painted parchment holding up the lower jaw. A similar covering seems to have been laid on the right foot, which projects out of the royal robes.

When the greatest miracle of Christianity, the resurrection of Christ, was performed for the conversion of men to the gospel, the Saviour himself offered the marks of his wounds to the close inspection of a doubting disciple. The church of Rome follows a different plan in the use of the multiplied miracles of which she boasts. She has no compassion for men who will credit only their sight and touch.

Historical miracles are safe from this troublesome curiosity; and to these I must return after my digression. Let us take a few specimens from those of the early ages of monachism. Among

these hardly any narrative will be found more curious than that which the Breviary copies from Saint Jerome, as a record of the life of Paul, the first Hermit. Paul, we are told, retired to a cave in the desert parts of the Thebais, where he lived from early youth to the age of one hundred and ten. Being near his death, Anthony, another Egyptian Anchorite, paid him a visit by a supernatural command from heaven. Their names being, in the same manner, revealed to each other, they met, for the first time, with the familiarity of old acquaintance. While they were talking about spiritual matters, a raven dropped a loaf of bread at the feet of Paul. "Thanks be to heaven," exclaimed the father of hermits; "it is now sixty years since I receive half a loaf daily in this manner: to-day my allowance has been doubled." On the morrow Paul requested his friend Anthony to return for a cloak, which, having belonged to Saint Athanasius, he wished to have as his winding-sheet. Anthony was coming back with the cloak, when he saw the soul of Paul going up into heaven surrounded by the holy company of the prophets and apostles. In the cave he found

the corpse with crossed legs, erected head, and the arms raised above it. He was, however, at a loss how to dig a grave, being also an old man of ninety, and having no spade or any instrument of that kind. In this distress he saw two lions hurrying towards him from the interior of the desert. The lions, in the best manner they could, gave him to understand that they meant him no harm, but, on the contrary, were much affected by the death of Paul. They then set to work with their claws, and having made a hole of sufficient size to contain the dead body, quietly and decently retired to their fastnesses. Anthony took possession of Paul's coat, which was made of palm-leaves like a basket, and wore it regularly as a holiday-dress on Easter and Whitsunday *.

* "Cumque ad ejus cellam pervenisset, invenit genibus complicatis, erecta cervice, extensisque in altum manibus, corpus exanime: quod pallio obvolvens, hymnosque et psalmos ex Christiana traditione decantans, cum sarculum, quo terram foderet non haberet, duo leones ex interiore eremo, rapido cursu ad beati senis corpus feruntur: ut facile intelligeretur, eos, quo modo poterant, ploratum edere; qui certatim terram pedibus effodientes, foveam, quæ hominem commode caperet, effecerunt. Qui cum abiissent, Antonius sanctum corpus in eum locum intulit: et injectâ humo, tumulum ex Christiano

The life of Saint Benedict, the great propagator of monastic life in the sixth century, has furnished the Breviary with several curious miracles. One of the first among the wonders he wrought, does not give a favourable idea of the character of religious associations at that period. Saint Benedict, having undertaken the government of a certain monastery, where he wished to introduce a more severe discipline than the inmates were disposed to follow, had a poisoned cup presented by the monks. He would have fallen a victim to their wickedness but for the habit of making the sign of the cross over every thing he eat or drank. The sign was no sooner made than the cup burst into pièces and spilt the deadly contents on the table.

Saint Benedict is inseparably coupled in my recollection with his sister, Saint Scholastica, who had the gift of working a peculiar kind of light,

more composuit: tunicam verò Pauli, quam in sportæ modum ex palmæ foliis ille sibi contexuerat secum auferens, eo vestitu diebus solemnibus Paschæ et Pentecostes, quoad vixit, usus est." Die xv. Januarii.—I give the original words only for the passages which might appear exaggerated in my own descriptions.

playful miracles, which our neighbours, the French, would probably denominate *miracles de famille*. By one of these, the holy nun Scholastica, who paid a yearly visit to her brother in an outhouse of his monastery, wishing to keep him a whole night in conversation, and not being able to persuade him, forced him to break the rule which bound him to sleep in his cell. The manner of carrying her point was simple enough. On hearing a positive refusal, she crossed her hands, laid them upon the table, then reclined her head upon them, and wept profusely. Her tears disturbed the state of the atmosphere, which, at that moment, was beautiful; and a violent storm of thunder and rain instantly ensued. In a few minutes the rivers overflowed their banks, and the whole country around was like a sea. Benedict, who was familiar with miracles, could not mistake the cause of the storm, and goodnaturedly reproached his sister. "What could I do?" said she with a saintly archness, of which none but readers of the Breviary could ever suspect the existence: "I entreated you, and was refused; I therefore asked my God, and he heard me. Now, brother,

go if you can: leave me and run away to your monastery." This playfulness is the more surprising as the good lady Scholastica had then a certainty of her approaching death. Benedict saw her soul, in the shape of a dove, wing up her way to heaven only three days after this miracle. —The instructive Lessons in which this is related come from no vulgar pen. They are portions of the Dialogues of Pope Gregory the *Great**.

* Scholastica, venerabilis Patris Benedicti soror, ... ad eum semel per annum venire consueverat: ad quam vir Dei non longè extra januam in possessione monasterii descendebat. Quâdam vero die venit ex more, atque ad eam cum discipulis, venerabilis ejus descendit frater, qui totum diem in Dei laudibus, sanctisque colloquiis ducentes, incumbentibus jam noctis tenebris, simul acceperunt cibum. Cumque adhuc ad mensam sederent, et inter sacra colloquia tardior se hora protraheret, eadem sanctimonialis fœmina soror ejus eum rogavit, dicens: "Quæso te, ut istâ nocte me non deseras, ut usque manè de cælestis vitæ gaudiis loquamur." Cui ille respondit: "Quid est quod loqueris, soror? manere extra cellam nullatenus possum." Tanta verò erat cœli serenitas, ut nulla in aëre nubes appareret. Sanctimonialis autem fœmina, cum verba fratris negantis audivisset, insertas digitis manus super mensam posuit; et caput in manibus, omnipotentem Dominum rogatura, declinavit. Cumque levaret de mensa caput, tanta corruscationis et tonitrui virtus, tantaque inundatio pluviæ erupit, ut neque venerabilis Benedictus, neque fratres qui cum eo aderant, extra loci limen, quo consederant, pedem movere

No one, however, who observes the profusion of wonders recorded in the breviary, can be surprised at these sportful displays of supernatural power. There is scarcely a saint who has not been honoured by miracles, which I would call *ornamental.* Celestial meteors have generally shone over the houses where a future saint was born,

potuerint. Sanctimonialis quippe fœmina caput in manibus declinans, lacrymarum fluvium in mensam fuderat, per quas serenitatem aëris ad pluviam traxit. Nec paulo tardius post orationem inundatio illa secuta est: sed tanta fuit convenientia orationis, et inundationis, ut de mensa caput jam cum tonitru levaret: quatenus unum idemque esset momentum, et levare caput, et pluviam deponere. Tunc vir Dei, inter corruscos, et tonitruos, atque ingentis pluviæ inundationem, videns se ad monasterium non posse remeare, cœpit conqueri contristatus dicens: "Parcat tibi omnipotens Deus, soror, quid est quod fecisti?" Cui illa respondit: "Ecce rogavi te, et audire me noluisti; rogavi Dominum meum, et audivit me: modò ergo, si potes, egredere, et me dimissâ ad monasterium recede," &c. Die 10 Februarii.

The collect for the feast of Scholastica is both a specimen of the assurance with which the church of Rome circulates her legends, and of her tenets concerning the intercession of saints. "Deus, qui animam beatæ Virginis tuæ Scholasticæ ad ostendendam innocentiæ viam, in columbæ specie cœlum penetrare fecisti, *da nobis, ejus meritis et precibus,* ita innocenter vivere, ut ad æterna mereamur gaudia pervenire." This is almost an invariable form of words in the Roman Catholic collects.

and the bells have rung of their own accord on the infants coming to light *: swarms of bees settled on their mouths, and even built a honey-comb in their hands, while lying in the cradle †. A baby saint had her face changed into a rose immediately after birth, that she might be called after that flower ‡. An angel in a bishop's robes, appeared upon the baptismal font, where a future prelate was to be baptised §. The mothers of these extraordinary beings seldom were without prophetic dreams during the time of gestation ||. Some saints performed miracles while yet in the womb; and it is asserted of St. Bridget that, in that invisible state, she saved her mother from shipwreck ¶. These holy children have not unfrequently spoken when scarcely five months old;

* St. John a Deo; St. Peter Celestinus, and many others.

† St. Ambrose, St. Peter Nolascus, St. Isidore, and many others.

‡ St. Rose à Sancta Maria.—"Vultus infantis, mirabiliter in rosæ effigiem transfiguratus, huic nomini occasionem dedit." Die 30 Augusti.

§ St. Julian of Cuenca.

|| See the life of St. Andrew Avellini, and others *passim*.

¶ "Cum adhuc in utero gestaretur, è naufragio, propter eam, mater erepta est."

though the object of their speeches was seldom so important as that of St. Philip Beniti, when, at that age, he chid his mother for sending some begging monks empty from her door *. Nor was this wonder exhibited only in the embryo-saints; common every-day babes have often spoken to discover the hiding-places of that nearly extinct generation of men, whom an impending mitre drove with affright into the fastnesses of deserts. St. Andrew Avellini, for instance, could not have been consecrated Bishop of Fiesole, unless he had been actually *betrayed* by the voice of an infant †.

The apostles, who had received the power of working miracles from Christ himself, for the great object of establishing his religion, appear to have been very limited in the use of their supernatural gifts; and never to have controlled the order of nature, except under the influence of that supernatural impulse, that unhesitating faith, which being in itself a miracle, was, in the strong and figurative language of their divine Master,

* "Vix enim quintum ætatis mensem ingressus, linguam in voces mirifice solvit, hortatusque fuit matrem, ut Deiparæ servis eleemosynam impertiret." Die 23 Augusti.

† "Pueri voce mirabiliter loquentis proditus."

said to be able to move mountains. It is far otherwise with the wonder-workers of the breviary. While these modern saints lived on earth, nature suffered a daily interruption of her laws, and that often for their own personal convenience. With the exception of St. Paul's preservation from the bite of the viper, we do not find miraculous interpositions in his favour. Indeed the account he gives of the hardships, dangers, and narrow escapes during his ministry, shows that miracles were not wrought for his comfort. Modern saints are more fortunate: Frances, a Roman widow, who enjoyed the familiar view and conversation of her guardian angel, once multiplied a few crusts of bread, so as to afford a substantial meal to fifteen nuns, and fill up a basket with the fragments. On another occasion she allayed their thirst with a bunch of miraculous grapes; and more than once was preserved by supernatural influence, from the inconvenience of getting wet in the rain, or even from the stream of a river *. St. Andrew Avel-

* "Deus, qui beatam Franciscam famulam tuam, inter cætera gratiæ tuæ dona, familiari angeli consuetudine decorasti," &c. Collect.

"Non semel aquæ, vel è cœlo labentes, intactam prorsus,

lini, retiring home in a storm, was equally preserved from the effects of rain. The benefit of this miracle was not only extended to his companions, but the whole company had the advantage of seeing their way in a pitch-dark night, by the radiancy of the saint's person *.

These phosphoric appearances, as well as a supernatural tendency to fly upwards, are so common among saints of the last four or five centuries, that it would be tedious to mention individual instances. St. Peter of Alcantara, a saint very remarkable for antigravitating qualities †, exhibited a very curious phenomenon in another storm. A tremendous fall of snow came on as he was re-

dum Deo vacaret reliquerunt. Modica panis fragmenta, quæ vix tribus sororibus reficiendis fuissent satis, sic ejus precibus Dominus multiplicavit, ut quindecim inde exsaturatis, tantùm superfuerit, ut canistrum impleverit: et aliquando earumdem sororum extra urbem, mense Januario ligna parantium, sitim, recentis uvæ racemis ex vite in arbore pendentibus mirabiliter obtentis, abunde expleverit." Die 9 Martis.

* "Cum enim intempesta nocte ab audita ægri confessione domum rediret, ac pluviæ ventorumque vis prælucentem facem extinxisset, non solum ipse, cum sociis, inter effusissimos imbres nihil madefactus est, verum etiam inusitato splendore, e suo corpore mirabiliter emicante, sociis inter densissimas tenebras iter monstravit." Die 10 Novembris.

† "In aera frequenter sublatus, miro fulgore corruscare visus est."

turning at night to the convent. Distressed for shelter, he entered a building, the most unfit for the occasion, as it wanted a roof to stop the snow. But the walls which still remained saved half the trouble to the miraculous agent employed on this occasion. The snow congealed into a solid roof, and completed the building in which Peter passed the night*. The cooling properties of this structure must have been highly welcome to a man, whose *charity* (I relate what I find in the Breviary) so used to raise the temperature of his blood, that it obliged him to break out from his cell and run distracted into the fields†.

The repetition of miracles is a matter of some

* "Cum noctu iter ageret, densâ nive cadente, dirutam domum sine tecto ingressus est, eique rex in aëre pendula pro tecto fuit, ne illius copia suffocaretur."

† "Charitas Dei et proximi in ejus corde diffusa, tantum quandoque excitabat incendium, ut è cellæ angustiis in apertum campum prosilire, aerisque refrigerio conceptum ardorem temperare cogeretur."—Another physical effect of charity is recorded in the life of St. Philip Neri, whose chest being too confined for the expansive ardour of that virtue, was miraculously enlarged by the fracture of two ribs.—"Charitate Dei vulneratus, languebat jugiter; tantoque cor ejus æstuabat ardore, ut cum inter fines suos contineri non posset, illius sinum, confractis atque elatis duabus costulis, mirabiliter Dominus ampliaverit." Die 26 Maii.

curiosity, as it might be expected that powers which baffle the laws of nature, would display an inexhaustible variety. Yet we find the earliest miracles repeated, and many occur regularly in the life of every saint. Of the latter kind are the luminous appearance of their faces; the multiplication or creation of food; living without sustenance; conversing with angels; emitting sweet effluvia from their dead bodies. More peculiar displays of supernatural interference appear, sometimes, at distant periods. St. Gregory, the wonderworker of the fourth century, fixed his staff in the ground, and it instantly grew up into a tree which stopt the floods of the river Lycus. The lately mentioned Peter of Alcántara made also his staff grow into a fig tree, which the friars of his order have propagated by cuts, in every part of Spain. This happened only in the sixteenth century. A raven provided Paul the hermit with bread: a wild doe presented herself daily to be milked by St. Ægidius. St. Eustachius, a martyr, said to have been a general under Trajan, was converted by seeing, in the chase, a stag bearing a crucifix between his antlers. St. John of Matha

founded the order of the Trinity, in consequence of seeing a similar animal with a tri-colour cross in the same position. There are also certain miraculous feats, for which saints have shown a peculiar fondness. Three navigations on a mantle are recorded in the Breviary. Saint Francis de Paula crossed the strait of Sicily on his own cloak, taking another monk as a passenger. St. Raymond de Pennafort sailed in the same manner, from Majorca to Barcelona. St. Hyacinth, a Pole, though only a fresh water sailor, deserves no less credit for the management of his cloth vessel across the flooded Vistula, notwithstanding a heavy cargo of monks*.

The mention of a Polish saint reminds me,

* St. Francis de Paula. "Multis miraculis servi sui sanctitatem Deus testari voluit, quorum illud in primis celebre, quòd a nautis rejectus, Siciliæ fretum, strato super fluctibus pallio, cum socio transmisit." Die 2 Aprili.

St. Raymond de Pennafort. "Multa patravit miracula; inter quæ illud clarissimum, quòd ex insula Baleari Majori Barcinonem reversurus, strato super aquas pallio, centum sexaginta milliaria sex horis confecerit; et suum cœnobium januis clausis fuerit ingressus." Die 23 Januarii.

St. Hyacinth. "Vandalum fluvium prope Visogradum aquis redundantem, nullo navigio usus trajecit, sociis quoque expanso super undas pallio, traductis." Die 16 Augusti.

however, of a miracle performed by St. Stanislaus, bishop of Cracow, which is not likely to have been often repeated. Stanislaus was on the point of being deprived of some lands, which he had purchased for his church. He could not show the title deeds; and the person to whom they formerly belonged, had been dead three years. The king being a decided enemy of the bishop, no witness would come forward in his favour. The diet of Poland was on the point of punishing Stanislaus for his supposed fraud, when, to the no small amusement of the noblemen present, he engaged, within three days, to present the late possessor of the estate. On the third the saint called the dead man out of the grave. Peter (that was his name) rose without delay, and followed the bishop to the diet; where having duly given his deposition in support of the bishop's right, he begged to be allowed to die again*. The king was, however,

* "Spondet episcopus se Petrum, pagi venditorem, qui triennio ante obierat, intra dies tres in judicium adducturum. Conditione cum risu acceptâ, vir Dei . . . ipso sponsionis die, post oblatum Missæ sacrificium, Petrum e sepulchro surgere jubet, qui statim redivivus, episcopum ad regium tribunal euntem sequitur, ibique rege, et cæteris stupore attonitis, de

too hardened to profit by this great miracle; and being enraged at the sentence of excommunication which the bishop soon after fulminated against him; killed him with his own hand, and ordered his body to be quartered and scattered about the fields. The wild beasts would have made a repast on the holy relics, but for the watchfulness of some eagles, which never allowed any one to touch them, till the canons of Cracow, led by the light thrown out by the scattered limbs, collected them the ensuing night. The different parts of the body, when properly adjusted together, united as closely as kindred drops, and not a mark was left of the effects of the knife*.

Novel and singular as the history of Stanislaus appears, I have a suspicion that another dead witness has somewhere else, appeared before a court of justice; but I defy hagiography to match

agro a se vendito, et pretio rite sibi ab episcopo persoluto testimonium dicit, atque iterum in Domino obdormivit."

* "Corpus membratim concisum, et per agros projectum, aquilæ a feris mirabiliter defendunt. Mox Canonici Cracovienses sparsa membra, nocturni de cœlo splendoris indicio colligunt, et suis locis aptè disponunt, quæ subitò ita inter se copulata sunt, ut nulla vulnerum vestigia extarent." Die 7 Maii.

the miracles I am going to relate from the life of a Spanish saint recorded in the Breviary.

St. Peter Armengaud, of the family of the counts of Urgel, had entered the Order of Mercy, and made some visits to Barbary for the liberation of Christian captives. The money collected for that purpose being exhausted before he could ransom some boys, whose faith appeared to be wavering; he sent them away with his companion, and remained as a hostage for the full amount of the debt. Charity like this, exerted by a free choice, and without the dangerous and oppressive system of religious vows, would be worth all the miracles of the Breviary. But the marvellous is a necessary element in every saint's life; and the good friars of the Mercy, have mixed it here in a rather undue proportion. Peter waited for his companion with a very natural anxiety; but the expected money did not come on the appointed day, and the barbarians settled the account by hanging their hostage. Great indeed was the distress of Father William, on learning the sad consequences of his delay: yet the body of a

martyr was worth having, and he insisted upon carrying it back to Spain. The Moors had no objection to part with it, and willingly led the monk to the place where Peter was still hanging by the neck. Three days in that posture would have closed a wind-pipe of brass; but Peter's was sufficiently free to address his religious brother, as soon as he saw him within hearing. The Virgin Mary, he informed him, had, since his execution, supported the weight of his body, and was still holding him up at that moment. Not to prolong the necessity of supernatural assistance, Peter was cut down without delay. Of the pleasures he had experienced while hanging, he used always to speak in raptures; notwithstanding a wry neck and habitual paleness for life, which the Virgin allowed him to keep, in remembrance of her assistance. It seems that, omitting the rope and beam, the scene of suspension was often repeated between Peter and his glorious prop; for the Breviary informs us that he frequently was seen raised in the air, uttering "the sweetest words" in answer to questions which the bystanders heard not, but

conjectured, most rationally, to proceed from the Virgin*.

"May I not ask (says the author of the Book of the Roman Catholic Church), if it be either just or generous to harass the present Catholics with the weaknesses of the ancient writers of their communion; and to attempt to render their religion and themselves odious by these unceasing

* "Ipse interim compedibus detentus, cum ad statutam diem parta pro redemptione merces non fuisset allata, et Mahometicæ superstitionis haberetur contemptor, collo ad lignum suspenditur. Ex Hispania ejus socius Guillelmus cum redemptionis pretio in Africam interea revertitur, et graviter beati viri amissionem deflens, ad locum ubi suspensus manebat, accessit; quem viventem reperit, sibique dicentem audivit: 'Charissime frater, ne fleveris; ecce enim sanctissimæ Virginis manibus sustentatus vivo, quæ mihi his diebus hilariter adfuit.' Inenarrabili itaque gaudio illum e suspendio deposuit, et, cunctis demirantibus, ac barbaris non credentibus, una cum aliis libertate donatis, læti in patriam reversi sunt. Ex illo autem tempore beatus Petrus collum e supplicio obtortum, et vultum squalore marcidum, quoad vixit, retinuit... Frequenter alienatus a sensibus in aerem sublatus, suavissima verba proferre auditus est, quibus, ut adstantibus videbatur, beatissimæ Virgini interroganti respondebat; suique martyrii memor, hæc fratribus dicere erat solitus: 'Ego, credite mihi, nullos reputo me vixisse dies, præter felicissimos illos paucos, quibus ligno suspensus, mundo putabar jam mortuus. Officia propria SS. Hispanorum, die 27 Aprilis.'"

and offensive repetitions?" This complaint should be addressed to the Pope and the Roman Catholic bishops, by whose authority, consent, and practice, these *weaknesses* are *unceasingly* repeated for the instruction of the members of their communion. I can sympathise with the feelings of the author; I can easily conceive how galling it must be for a *modernized* Roman Catholic, in this country, to be constantly suspected of being a Roman Catholic, indeed, and according to the Pope's heart. His case is as deplorable as that of a man of fashion, who should be compelled to frequent the higher circles in company with an old, fantastic, half-crazed mother, who daily and hourly exposed herself to contempt and ridicule, in spite of his filial efforts to hide her absurdities. The truth is, that the Protestants have nearly forgotten the monstrous heap of falsehood and imposture from which Rome daily feeds her flock. But the offensive repetitions resound on the ears of your *harassed* apologist from the lips of every bishop, priest, deacon and subdeacon of his communion: they are chanted incessantly in every Roman Catholic cathedral, in every con-

vent of males or females: they are translated into popular tracts *: they are heard and read with avidity by the mass of straight-forward, uncompromising Catholics, and cannot be scouted by the more fastidious, without a direct reproach on the most constant, solemn, and authorised practice of their church. In vain would the suffering scholar, the *harassed* man of refinement, attempt a distinction between the miracles of dark ages, and those of more modern times: in vain would he venture a smile on the "Golden Legend, and the patrician Metaphrastes." His mother church has thrown her mantle over them, by borrowing from them all for her own peculiar book, her own corrected work, the task-book of all her clergy. He must remember that the *weaknesses* for which he implores the benefit of oblivion are

* I believe that these stories are much circulated among the Roman Catholics of these kingdoms in the shape of popular pamphlets. I have not, however, been able to procure a copy, owing to the unwillingness of Roman Catholic booksellers to furnish unknown purchasers with a certain peculiar produce of their press. I had strong reasons to suspect the existence of this policy, when it was confirmed to me by the personal experience of a clerical friend.

no more imputable to their original and ancient sources, but to the Popes who republished them at the Vatican, in 1631; to the church, who with one accordant voice repeats them to the faithful of all climates and languages.

It were well, however, for the happiness and virtue of the spiritual subjects of Rome, if their church had sanctioned *weaknesses* only—absurdities which degrade the understanding—and had left the rules of Christian conduct undisturbed. But the Breviary is not more absurd in matters of fact than depraved in the views of moral perfection, which it disseminates. I will not, however, dwell long upon this topic, since the attachment of the church of Rome to *monastic* virtue, has at all times betrayed her distorted views of evangelical perfection. The specimens which I am about to select from the multitude of her saintly models, are not intended to convict her of errors which she glories in, but to impress their consequences on those that seldom or never dwell upon these important topics. As I cannot separate, in these specimens, what strictly belongs to the subject on which I am going to touch,

from the miraculous ornaments with which these legends are crowded, I beg you to keep this in mind, that the progress and course of my argument may be perceived.

Whatever may be the freedom which Rome allows in the belief or rejection of her miracles—whatever be the unfairness of asserting and propagating absurdities, under the excuse that no force is employed to ensure their reception—whether the church that sanctions and uses the Breviary believes the accounts it contains, or secretly smiles at the credulity of those who credit them; it might be hoped that the models proposed for imitation would have been safe in regard of Christian practice. This is certainly not the case. There is, indeed, in most of the Roman Catholic saints much of that benevolent spirit of the Gospel, which must always be found in every heart which opens itself to the divine influence of its leading truths; but Christian charity is in them so mixed with substantial and pervading errors, that it is seldom unproductive of evil.

The first noxious ingredient which poisons charity in the Roman Catholic system of sanctity, is

intolerance. The seeds of this bitter plant are, indeed, inseparable from a hearty reception of her doctrines, as I have proved before; but its mature fruit, persecution, is praised among the virtues of saints whose circumstances enabled them to use force against pagans or heretics. Thus, in the life of Canute the Dane, his donations to the church are hardly more commended than the zeal with which he conquered the barbarians, with the purpose of making them Christians *. St. Ferdinand, King of Castille, is represented as an eminent sample of that peculiar Roman Catholic virtue, which visits dissent from the faith of Rome with the mild correctives of sword and fire. "In alliance with the cares of government, the regal virtues (says the Breviary) shone in him—magnanimity, clemency, justice, and above all zeal for the Catholic faith, and an ardent determination to defend and propagate its worship. This he performed, in the first place, by persecuting heretics,

* "Religioni promovendæ sedulo incumbens, ecclesias redditibus augere, et pretiosa supellectili ornare cœpit. Tum zelo propagandæ fidei succensus, barbara regna justo certamine aggressus, devictas, subditasque nationes Christianæ fidei subjugavit." Die 19 Januarii.

to whom he allowed no repose in any part of his kingdom; and for whose execution, when condemned to be burnt, he used to carry the wood with his own hands*." Who then shall be surprised to find inquisitors canonized by Rome, or to hear her addressing a daily prayer to the great and merciful Father of mankind, "that he would be pleased to bruise, by the power of his right hand, all pagan and heretical nations?" Such are the words which Rome puts in the mouth of every Spanish priest who celebrates high mass †.

The power of persecuting others, upon the grand scale, which the Church of Rome exalts into a kingly virtue, is given but to very few among

* "In eo, adjunctis regni curis, regiæ virtutes emicuere, magnanimitas, clementia, justitia, et præ cæteris Catholicæ Fidei zelus, ejusque religiosi cultus propagandi ardens studium. Id præstitit in primis hæreticos insectando, quos nullibi regnorum suorum consistere passus, propriis ipse manibus ligna comburendis damnatis ad rogum, advehebat." Propria Ss. Hispan. Die 30 Maii.

† The concluding collect contains a prayer for the Pope in the first, for the bishop of the diocese in the second, and for the royal family in the third place; it then proceeds to pray for peace and health, and concludes, "*et ab ecclesia tua cunctam repelle nequitiam*, ET GENTES PAGANORUM ET HÆRETICORUM DEXTERÆ TUÆ POTENTIA CONTERANTUR, &c. &c.

mankind: whilst every individual may be made his own tormentor by adopting the practices which that church represents as the means to arrive at Christian perfection. Zeal and sincerity, are equally dangerous under the tuition of Rome. The Catholic nunneries rob society of the most amiable and virtuous female minds—those who in the practice of the social duties, would be a blessing to their relatives and friends, and patterns of virtue to the community—to make their lives, at the best, a perpetual succession of toilsome and useless practices. The quiet and sober-minded are made the slaves of outward ceremonies; the ardent and sensitive are doomed to enthusiasm or madness. Such are the invariable results of the models which Rome presents them daily for imitation.

The love of external ceremonies is notorious in the Roman Catholic church; but few, even among the persons whom I address, will probably have given a distinct and separate consideration to the special models, by which their church sanctions and recommends this peculiar manner of sanctity. Let them, therefore, conceive themselves as con-

temporaries of Saint Patrick, and imagine they see him pursuing the regular and daily employment of his time. The holy saint rises before daylight, and, under the snows and rains of a northern winter, begins his usual task of praying *one hundred* times in a day, and again *one hundred* times in the night. Such, the Breviary informs, was his daily practice while still a layman and a slave. When raised to the see of Armagh, his activity in the external practice of prayer appears quite prodigious. In the first place he repeated, daily, the one hundred and fifty psalms of the Psaltery, with a collection of canticles and hymns, and two hundred collects. The two hundred genuflexions of his youth were now increased to three hundred. The ecclesiastical day being divided into eight canonical hours, and each of these having one hundred blessings with the sign of the cross allotted by Saint Patrick, his right hand must have performed that motion *eight hundred times* a day. After this distracting stir and hurry, the night brought but little repose to the saint. He divided it into three portions: in the first he recited *one hundred* psalms, and knelt *two hun-*

dred times; during the second he stood immersed in cold water repeating *fifty* psalms more, "with his heart, eyes, and hands raised towards heaven;" the third he gave up to sleep, upon a stone pavement*. Imagine to yourselves, I again request, the patron saint of Ireland, not as an ideal and indistinct personage of legend; but as a real man of flesh and blood. Depict, in the vivid colours of fancy, the bustle, the perpetual motion, the eternal gabbling, the plunging into water for prayer, the waving of the hands for benedictions, the constant falling upon the knees, the stretching of hands, the turning up of eyes, required for the ascetic practices of his life; and then repeat the memorable words of our Saviour — *The hour*

* "Antelucano tempore per nives, gelu, ac pluvias ad preces Deo fundendas, impiger consurgebat; solitus centies interdiu, centiesque noctu Deum orare... Aiunt enim integrum quotidie Psalterium, una cum canticis et hymnis, ducentisque orationibus consuevisse recitare: ter centies per dies singulos flexis genibus Deum adorare, ac in qualibet Hora Canonica, centies se crucis signo munire. Noctem tria in spatia distribuens, primum in centum psalmis percurrendis, et bis centies genuflectendo, alterum in reliquis quinquaginta psalmis, algidis aquis immersus, ac corde, oculis, manibusque ad cœlum erectus, absolvendis insumebat: tertium vero super nudum lapidem stratus, tenui dabat quieti." Die 17 Martii.

*cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father, in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth**. Compare the sublime simplicity of this description of Christian piety, with the models which your church sets before you; and tell me whether they agree. I will not dispute whether the list of devotional practices attributed to Saint Patrick, be authentic or fictitious, accurate or exaggerated. The church of Rome would not have recorded it in her authorised book of spiritual instruction, if, in her opinion, it did not exalt the piety of her saint. The worthies of the Breviary, whether sketched from nature or pictured from fancy, must be a faithful transcript of Rome's ideal models of Christian perfection. The practices attributed to Saint Patrick are, therefore, made an object of imitation to all the sons of the church of Rome, according to their strength and circumstances; and the principle that such practices are a part of Evangelical

* John iv. 23, 24.

virtue, will not be questioned by a sincere Roman Catholic. Indeed, among the saints of the Breviary, most will be found commended for similar practices; and not a book of devotion, by writers of that communion exists, which does not represent some bodily exercise or distortion, as an effectual method of pleasing God *.

All this, however, is intimately connected with the Roman Catholic notions on penance—a subject which well deserves the dispassionate consideration of every impartial member of that communion.

* The least morose of all Roman Catholic saints, Saint Francis de Sales, though not carrying these practices to the degree usual among professed saints, strongly recommends this kind of spiritual gymnastics to his friends. The following are his directions to a gentleman "*qui vouloit se retirer du monde.*"

"Je vous conseille de pratiquer ces exercises pour ces trois mois suivans... que vous vous leviez toujours à six heures matin, soit que vous ayez bien dormi, ou mal dormi, pourvû que vous ne soyez pas malade (car alors il faut condescendre au mal) et pour faire quelque chose de plus les vendredis, vous vous leviez à cinq heures... Item, que vous vous accoutumiez à dire tous les jours, après ou devant l'oraison, quinze *Pater noster* et quinze *Ave, Maria,* les bras étendus en guise de crucifix.... Encore, voudrois-je quelquefois la semaine vous couchassiez vêtu.... et ces jours-là de fête, vous pourrez bien visiter par manière d'exercice les lieux saints des capucins, S. Bernard, les Chartreux."—Lettres de Saint François de Sales.

If it be once settled that self-inflicted suffering is, by itself, a virtue; the progress between a simple fast and the tortures voluntarily endured by the Indian fanatics, is natural and unbroken. The practice of Roman Catholic saints, approaches very nearly indeed to that of the Eastern worshippers of the Evil Principle. Open the Breviary at any of the pages containing the lives of saints, males or females, and you will find uninterrupted abstinence from food (whether real or not, certainly held out to admiration, and sanctioned by the assertion of miracles in its favour) since Ash Wednesday till Whitsunday*: living one half of the year on bread and water†: confinement for four years to a niche excavated in a rock‡; and every where the constant use of flagellation, lacerating bandages, and iron chains bound constantly about the body, immersions in freezing water, and every method of gradually and painfully destroying life. The Roman Catholics will talk of penance *in modera-*

* Life of St. Catharine of Sienna.

† St. Elizabeth of Portugal.

‡ The blessed Dalmatius Monerius, in the Propria SS. Hispan.

tion; but where is the line drawn, where, indeed, can it be drawn, to point the beginning of excess? Must I again revive the memory of the victims whom I have seen perish in their youth, from the absolute impossibility of moderating the enthusiasm which their church thus encourages? It is chiefly among the tender and delicate of the female sex, that the full effects of these examples are seen. How can a confessor prescribe limits to the zeal of an ardent mind, which is taught to please God by tormenting a frail body? Teach an enthusiastic female that self-inflicted death will endear her to her heavenly bridegroom, and she will press the rope or the knife to her lips. Distant danger is lighter than a feather to hearts once swollen with the insane affections of religious enthusiasm. Talk to them about the duty of preserving life, and they will smile at the good natured casuistry, which would moderate their pursuit of a more noble and more disinterested duty—that of loving their God above their own lives. Their church has besides, practically dispensed the duty of self-preservation in favour of penance. Does not the young victim read of her model

Saint Theresa, that "her ardour in punishing the body was so vehement as to make her use hair-shirts, chains, nettles, scourges, and even to roll herself among thorns, regardless of a diseased constitution?"—Is she not told that St. Rose, "from a desire to imitate St. Catharine*, wore, day and night, three folds of an iron chain round her waist; a belt set with small needles, and an iron crown armed inside with points? That she made to herself a bed of the unpolished trunks of trees, and that she filled up the interstices with pieces of broken pottery?" She did all this in spite of her "tortures from sickness," and by this means she obtained the frequent visits of saints and angels; and heard Christ himself uttering the words, "*Rose of my heart, be thou my bride.*" Can the poor, weak, visionary recluse doubt the reality of scenes attested by her church, or question the lawfulness of slow self-murder, supported by the brightest of her commended models†?

* Observe the effect of the proposed models. The Breviary records a number of similar imitations: every one acquainted with Roman Catholics must have seen them repeated every day.

† St. Theresa...."Per duodeviginti annos gravissimis morbis et variis tentationibus vexata, constantissimè meruit

The only rational principle which can regulate self-denial, and give it the stamp of a Christian virtue, would condemn the whole of the monkish system at once: Rome, therefore, cannot, will

in castris Christianæ pœnitentiæ... Infidelium et hæreticorum tenebras perpetuis deflebat lacrymis, atque ad placandam divinæ ultionis iram, voluntarios proprii corporis cruciatus Deo, pro eorum salute dicabat... Tam anxio castigandi corporis desiderio æstuabat, ut quamvis secus suaderent morbi, quibus afflictabatur, corpus ciliciis, catenis, urticarum manipulis, aliisque asperrimis flagellis sæpe cruciaret, et aliquando inter spinas volutaret, sic Deum alloqui solita: 'Domine, aut pati aut mori'... Ei morienti adesse visus est inter angelorum agmina Christus Jesus: et arbor arida cellæ proxima statim efloruit." Die 15 Octobris.

St. Rose of Lima... "Oblongo asperrimoque cilicio sparsim minusculas acus intexuit; sub velo coronam densis aculeis introrsus obarmatam, interdiu noctuque gestavit. Sanctæ Catharinæ Senensis ardua premens vestigia, catenâ ferreâ, triplici nexu circumductâ, lumbos cinxit. Lectulum sibi è truncis nodosis composuit, horumque vacuas commissuras fragminibus testarum implevit. Cellulam sibi angustissimam struxit in extremo horti angulo, ubi cælestium contemplationi dedita, crebris disciplinis, inediâ, vigiliis corpusculum extenuans, at spiritu vegetata, larvas dæmonum frequenti certamine victrix, impavidè protrivit ac superavit...: Exinde cœpit supernis abundare deliciis, illustrari visionibus, colliquescere Seraphicis ardoribus. Angelo tutelari, sanctæ Catharinæ Senensi, Virgini Deiparæ inter assiduas apparitiones mirè familiaris, a Christo has voces audire meruit: 'Rosa cordis mei, tu mihi sponsa esto.'" Die 30 Augusti.

not admit it. Make the good of mankind the only ground for voluntary endurance of pain; make the habit of rational self-denial (without which extensive usefulness is impossible) the object of certain slight privations, used as a discipline of mind and body; and a convent assumes the character of a mad-house. Penance is, consequently, erected into an independent virtue, and saints are made to appear after death, in glory, to proclaim the Indian doctrine of heavenly enjoyments purchased by bodily sufferings *.

The models which Rome presents for imitation, are not more removed from the spiritual simplicity of the Gospel, than they are from that soberness of devotional feeling which pervades the whole of the New Testament. Read the lives of saints who have lived since the beginning of the sixteenth century; and, whether male or female, you will find a *sentimentality* of devotion, a suspicious kind of tenderness, which from time to time, has alarmed the truly sincere sons of Rome,

* St. Peter of Alcantara is said to have appeared after death to St. Theresa, and exclaimed: *O felix pœnitentia, quæ tantam mihi promeruit gloriam!* Die 31 Octobris.

under the grosser shape of devotional sensuality. There is, I am aware, a distinction between the raptures of St. Theresa, and the ecstatic reveries of the quietists; but on reading her own account of her feelings, and hearing the description which the church of Rome gives of her visions, it is impossible not to observe that both have some moral elements in common. The picture of St. Theresa fainting under the wound which an angel inflicts on her heart with a fiery spear, were it not for the nun's weeds worn by the principal figure; might easily be mistaken for a votive tablet intended for some heathen temple: and her dying "rather of love than disease" is more worthy of a novel of doubtful tendency, than of a collection of lives prepared by a Christian church, to exemplify the moral effects of the Gospel*.

* "Tanto autem divini amoris incendio cor ejus conflagravit, ut merito viderit angelum ignito jaculo sibi præcordia transverberantem; et audierit Christum datâ dexterâ dicentem sibi: 'Deinceps ut vera sponsa meum zelabis honorem.'"—(I cannot venture any remarks on the apposition of these emblems.) "Intolerabili igitur divini amoris incendio potius, quam vi morbi ... sub columbæ specie purissimum animum Deo reddidit." Ubi supra.—I must observe, without however insinuating any thing more than the dangerous

Does the Breviary produce effects analogous to the character of its contents, and commensurate to the extent of the use of it by the Roman Catholics? Does it everywhere degrade faith into credulity, and devotion into sentimentality? That it does so among Roman Catholics, in Italy, in Spain, in Portugal, and in all other countries where the religion of Rome predominates; is a matter of general notoriety. It would afford an additional praise of the reformed religion, if it could be proved that the Roman Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland, had been preserved from the injurious effects which the *true* book of their church, has so widely produced among their foreign brethren. It is possible that the class of Roman Catholics to whom I have addressed myself in these letters, and who alone are likely to read them, have never since their childhood exa-

nature of this kind of devotion, that in male saints it generally has the Virgin for its object. The life of St. Bernard contains descriptions of visions, which would be unfit for the eye of the public in any other book. Hagiography, however, gives great liberty both to writers and painters. The picture of the vision I allude to, I have seen in a convent of Cistercian Nuns. The Breviary however omits the story which forms its subject.

mined the devotional books published in England for the use of the *sincerely pious* among them. If they should be well acquainted with such books, they will not require any further proof of the perfect agreement between the minds and feelings of such persons, and those which I have instanced from the Breviary. Such as may have forgotten the character of their devotional books would do well to reperuse them. I will, however, in the mean time, give one or two specimens, from the TWELFTH London edition, of the DEVOTION AND OFFICE OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS*. I have so much exceeded the length which I proposed to give this letter, that I will not detain my readers much longer upon this subject.

The *ostensible* Roman Catholics of England, I mean such as appear in the character of specimens of their religious communion, are so dexterous in the use of theological distinctions, so practised in the pious work of throwing a cloak over the nakedness of their spiritual parent, that the Protestant public

* Extracts from this book will be found in an Appendix, after the Notes to these Letters.

will hardly expect the following rule of belief, upon matters not strictly of dogmatic faith, prevalent among the pious and sincere Roman Catholics of these realms. The rule applies to the subject of revelations and miracles, such as the Roman Church records in her Breviary.

"The public is in possession of many writings of holy women, who have yielded to advice and obeyed their spiritual directors. They contain an account of many revelations, celestial visions, and other extraordinary graces, which they have received from God. Now I reason thus: either these writings were penned by the saints, or they were not. If they were, either they designedly published a falsehood, or were themselves deluded, and have given us idle dreams. Will you suppose that they were not the real authors of these works? You shock every idea of reason and common sense. The man who will venture to deny that St. Theresa wrote her life, may doubt of her existence. But you will say she was deluded, and her imagination deluded all she wrote. The delusion must be the work of the evil spirit, which no Catholic can believe to have had any

power over the chaste spouse of Jesus Christ, canonized by the church. If imagination prevailed, it is true she was not a hypocrite, but a fool. *I shudder at the thought of so impious, so groundless an imputation.* Who can believe that these saints lived in a perpetual aberration of mind? I say perpetual, for we are not here treating of transient acts, which lasted a few hours or days, or even during certain periods of life, but the duration of which is measured by the whole extent of their existence*." I know this argument to be unanswerable upon the principles of a sincere Roman Catholic; and cannot but feel pained to see that it must have weight with millions of Britons. Such is the genuine work of Rome among the most thinking people of Europe! Strange that a set of Italian priests should have it in their power thus to emasculate understandings, which claim kindred with Locke, Napier, and Berkeley.

Nor is their power less effectual in rendering Christian devotion in these kingdoms as childish,

* Page 70.

disgusting, and contemptible as it appears in the worst pages of the Breviary. I have at this moment before me an *Angelical Exercise*, which the same English Manual of Devotion recommends in the following terms: "Whosoever is devoted to this exercise in honour of the blessed Virgin Mary, in reading over every point, may meditate upon it for the space of one *Hail Mary*, or more, and by God's grace, he will in a short time find himself greatly increase in love towards that blessed queen of Heaven; and at the hour of death will, by so pious a mother, be received as her dearest child. Nor can such a one, according to St. Anselm and St. Bernard, possibly perish, but shall find life everlasting, and taste of the joys of eternal bliss*."

Under these assurances the devout Roman Catholic is urged to peruse a series of questions, as from the Virgin Mary, and give his own answers, in the words which the book suggests. I select the *Exercise for Monday* as a specimen, not be-

* Page 275.

cause its tone of devotion is more puerile than the rest, but as containing a fresh and striking proof of the indefatigable industry of Roman Catholic priests, in entrapping young people to take the dangerous vow of perpetual celibacy.

"I am the Queen of Virgins, *Regina Virginum*, says the glorious Mother of God. Will you, my dear child, remain a virgin all your life, and live, as it were, an angel in flesh, as did my dearly beloved son Aloysius Gonzaga, St. Agnes, St. Catherine, and a thousand others, my devoted children, who have rather chosen to lose their lives than their virginity? I will love you as I have loved them, and cherish you as I cherish the angels, and, if it be possible, more than the angels themselves; and moreover, my child, I will obtain your name shall be written in the book of the blessed; and assure you, with a heart truly maternal, that at your death you will wish you had been the most chaste and holy in the world. Think well upon it, and resolve the best.—Hail Mary!"

"Yes, my most dear Mother! I desire to be pure all my life, as well in body as soul: I

do, I say, most humbly desire it, and most earnestly beseech you, dear Lady, to obtain for me that which you so much recommend to me. I do here, prostrate, reverence you, O sacred Virgin Mary, Mother of the Word incarnate! and together with the holy thrones and all celestial spirits, ever bless and praise you infinitely, the Morning Star, *Stella Matutina;* for that you, the most beautiful of all creatures, were the first that did vow perpetual chastity, preparing the way to so many virginal souls which have already followed, and shall hereafter follow you in so high, so glorious, and so divine an enterprise.—Hail Mary!"

In the name of the Father of Spirits, "whose eyes are upon the truth," I entreat such as love the Author of our common faith, more than the name of a religious party, not to efface the impression of shame which these passages must produce, by the usual method of recrimination. I protest before Heaven, that neither through these quotations, nor by any expression which in the course of this work may have flowed from my

feelings, it has been my purpose to hurt yours. Remember, that whatever absurdities you might glean from Protestant writers, cannot affect a church whose authorised articles of faith and form of prayer, have nothing in common with such aberrations from common sense and the Gospel. Observe, on the other hand, how naturally the credulity and dangerous sentimentality with which your *pious books* abound, flow from the system of Rome, exhibited in her *prayer-book*, as well as in her whole conduct in regard to miracles and devotional practices. Remark the activity and watchfulness with which she has at all times persecuted all kinds of books, wherein the least insinuation was thrown out, not against her articles of faith, but even the least part of this her deluding system. Compare it with the supine indifference which she exhibits in giving free course to thousands of books which, at this very day, propagate every thing that can degrade the understanding and enfeeble the mind, under the name of piety. When you have candidly and honestly weighed all this, decide with yourselves, if it be not the part of every

ingenuous and liberal Catholic of these kingdoms, to strike out the *Roman* from his religious denomination, and place in its stead the noble epithet of Christian? Preserve, with God's blessing, so much of your tenets as may appear to you consistent with his word; but disown a church which, by her miracles, libels the Gospel history with imposture; and whose mawkish piety disfigures the sublime Christian worship into drivelling imbecility.

NOTES.

A.—Page 31.

THOUGH it is impossible that Mr. Southey can omit to take notice of the strange charge which his antagonist makes against him, respecting a passage of Paulus Emilius Veronensis, Mr. Butler's hallucination is so extraordinary on this point, that I must expose it as a general caution to my readers.

The passage relates to some deputies of the city of Palermo, who came to implore the Pope's mercy in behalf of their fellow-citizens. I will copy both the Latin words and the translation of them from Mr. B.'s Book of the R. C. Church, pp. 131 and 132, first edition.

"Cum apud Pontificem de hac consternatione ageretur, a Panormitanis missos ad eum oratores, viros sanctos, qui ad pedes illius strati, VELUT pro arâ hostiâque, CHRISTUM AGNUM DEI SALUTANTES, illa ETIAM ex altaris mysteriis verba supplices effarentur—'Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nostri:—Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nostri:—Qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.' Pontificem respondisse, Panormitanos agere quod fecissent, qui, cum Christum pulsarent, eundem regem Judæorum salutabant, re hostes, fando salvere jubentes."

Mr. Butler thus translates the passage:—

"The city of Palermo having grievously offended the Pope sent some holy men to him as ambassadors, who prostrated

themselves at his feet, AND SALUTED CHRIST THE LAMB OF GOD, as before an altar and the blessed sacrament, and suppliantly pronounced the mystic words of the altar, 'Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us! Who takest away the sins of the world, give us peace!' The Pope replied by telling them, that they acted like those who, after they had struck Christ, saluted him King of the Jews; that in reality they were his enemies, although in these words they wished him health."

This translation makes the transaction quite unintelligible. The ambassadors SALUTED CHRIST, and yet the Pope, taking the salutation to himself, accuses them of being his enemies in reality, though in the words they had used they wished him health. The fact is, that a school-boy that can construe the Selecta è Profanis would be able to clear the difficulty at once. Had Mr. Butler taken notice of the VELUT, which qualifies the whole of the next sentence, and the ETIAM, which applies to the words taken from the Mass, he would have perceived his mistake. But he drew the attention of the readers to the *Christum Agnum Dei salutantes* by means of a larger type, for fear of their stumbling on those two little words. Let, now, the public judge if the natural translation of the words be not as follows:—"Who being prostrate at his feet, AS IF they were saluting Christ the Lamb of God before the *ara* and the host, used EVEN those words from the mysteries of the altar, (i. e. the Mass), *Agnus Dei*," &c.

This translation ought to have been evident to a Roman Catholic, well acquainted with the ceremony to which the writer alludes. The priest, Mr. B. well knows, bending upon the *ara*, or consecrated slab of marble, which lies in the centre of the altar, and looking on the consecrated host, smites his breast three times, using these very words, *Agnus Dei*, &c.,

and concluding with *dona nobis pacem.* Nothing, therefore, can be clearer, than that when the ambassadors used these words at the Pope's feet, they wished to address them to the Pope himself, of whom they came to ask *peace.* Mr. B. asserts that the Pope *resiled* from the address. Why? If the words were directed to Christ, what fault could he find in them? He *resiled,* because he believed the ambassadors to be insincere in their professions towards him.

The whole mistake is so unaccountable, and the writer, by copying the original words, has made it so palpable, that it seems to stand in the book of the R. C. Church to warn the readers of the strong bias under which the author labours.

Since writing the preceding note, it has cost me no small trouble to find the passage quoted by Mr. Butler. If that gentleman took it from the original, he should have mentioned the edition. In that of Basle, 1601, the words in question are found at page 233: Mr. B. refers to page 328. I might have spared myself the trouble of a long and tedious search, but for a strong suspicion, grounded upon several instances of Mr. Butler's inaccuracy of quotation, that in his transcript of Paulus Æmilius's words there was an *additional comma,* just in the place where it may throw some ambiguity on the sense. And so I have found it. The original has *qui ad pedes illius strati, velut pro arâ hostiâque Christum Agnum Dei salutantes;* evidently connecting the whole sentence with the particle of comparison *velut.* Mr. Butler, however, places a comma after *hostiaque.* It fortunately happens, however, that the rest of the passage betrays the original reading. I must add one word more to obviate a pos-

sible subterfuge of casuistry. Will it be possible that the figure of a semicolon used in old editions to denote the abbreviation of the *que*, in *hostiaq;* be pleaded in favour of Mr. Butler's punctuation? If such a defence should be attempted, the reader must know, that in the very same page of the original work, a comma is placed after the mark of abbreviation, whenever the sense requires it. Thus, in the eighth line from the bottom, it is written, per nefariam fraudem, furtumq;, sed id atrocissimum, &c. &c.

B.—Page 45.

BOSSUET'S OPINION TO JAMES II.

Sur la Declaration du Roi d'Angleterre.

La déclaration qu'on a demandée au Roi d'Angleterre en faveur de ses sujets Protestants, consiste principalement en deux points.

Le premier est que S. M. promette *de protéger et défendre l'Eglise Anglicane comme elle est présentement établie par les loix, et qu'elle assure aux membres d'icelle toutes leurs églises, universités, colleges, et écoles, avec leurs immunites, droits, et priviléges.*

Le second que sa dite Majesté promette aussi qu'*elle ne violera point le serment du Test, ni n'en dispensera point.*

J'ai répondu et je réponds que S. M. peut accorder sans difficulté ces deux articles.

Et pour entendre la raison de cette réponse, il ne faut que fixer le sens véritable de deux articles en question.

Le premier a deux parties: L'une de protéger et défendre l'Eglise Anglicane comme elle est présentement établie par les

loix; ce qui n'emporte autre chose que de laisser ces loix dans leur vigeur, et comme Roi les exécuter selon leur forme et teneur.

La conscience du Roi d'Angleterre, n'est point blessée par cette partie de sa déclaration, puisque la protection et la défense qu'il y promet à l'Eglise Anglicane Protestante ne regarde que l'exterieur, et n'oblige S. M. à autre chose qu'à laisser cette prétendue Eglise dans l'état exterieur où il la trouve, sans troubler ni permettre qu'on l'y trouble.

Et pour décider cette question par principes: il faut faire grande différence entre la protection qu'on donneroit à une Eglise par adhérence aux mauvais sentiments qu'elle professe et celle qu'on lui donne pour conserver à l'exterieur la tranquillité publique. Le premier genre de protection est mauvais parcequ'il a un mauvais principe qui est l'adhérence à la fausseté: mais le second est très-bon parcequ'il a pour principe l'amour de la paix et pour object une chose bonne et nécessaire, qui est le répos public.

Ceux qui traitent en cette occasion avec le Roi d'Angleterre ne lui demandent pas l'approbation de la Religion Anglicane, puisqu'au contraire ils le supposent Catholique et traitent avec lui comme l'etant: Ils ne lui demandent donc qu'une protection royale, c'est-a-dire, une protection à l'exterieur, telle qu'elle convient a un Roi qui ne peut rien sur les consciences: et tout le monde demeure d'accord que cette protection est legitime et licite.

Les Rois de France ont bien donné par l'édit de Nantes une espèce de protection aux prétendus réformés, en les assurant contre les insultes de ceux qui les voudroient troubler dans leur exercice, et leur accordant des espèces de privilèges, où ils ordonnent à leurs officiers de les maintenir. On n'a pas cru que leur conscience fût intéressée dans ces concessions, tant

qu'elles ont été jugées nécessaires pour le repos public, parceque c'étoit ce repos et non pas la religion prétendue réformée qui en étoit le motif. On peut dire a proportion la même chose du Roi d'Angleterre, et s'il accorde de plus grands avantages à ses sujets Protestants, c'est que l'état où ils sont dans ses royaumes et le motif du répos public l'exige ainsi.

Aussi ceux qui trouvent à redire à cet endroit de l'article ne mettent-ils la difficulté qu'en ce qu'ils prétendent qu'il enferme une tacite promesse d'exécuter les lois pénales qui sont décernées par les parlements contre les Catholiques: parceque, disent-ils, les Protestants mettent dans ces lois pénales une partie de la protection qu'ils demandent pour l'Eglise Anglicane Protestante.

Mais les paroles dont se sert le Roi n'emportent rien de semblable, et il importe de bien comprendre comme parle cette déclaration: *Nous protégerons*, dit-elle, *et defendrons l'Eglise Anglicane comme elle est presentement établie par les loix.* Il ne s'agit donc que des principes constitutifs de cette prétendue Eglise en elle-même, et non pas des lois pénales par lesquelles elle prétendroit pouvoir repousser les religions qui lui sont opposées.

Ces principes constitutifs de la religion Anglicane selon les loix du pays sont, 1°. les prétendus articles de foi réglés sous la Reine Elisabeth; 2°. la liturgie approuvée par les parlements; 3° les homélies ou instructions que les mêmes parlements ont autorisées.

On ne demande point au Roi qu'il se rende le promoteur de ces trois choses, mais seulement qu'a l'extérieur il leur laisse un libre cours pour le repos de ses sujets: ce qui suffit d'un côté pour maintenir ce qui constitue a l'extérieur l'Eglise Anglicane Protestante, et de l'autre ne blesse point la conscience du Roi.

Voilà donc à quoi il s'oblige par cette première partie du premier article de sa declaration, la deuxième partie de l'article où il promet *d'assurer à l'Eglise Protestante et à ses membres leur églises*, etc., a encore moins de difficulté, et même elle tempère la première en reduisant manifestement la protection et la défense de l'Eglise Anglicane Protestante aux choses extérieures dont elle est en possession, et dans lesquelles le Roi promet seulement de ne souffrir point qu'on la trouble.

Le Roi est bien éloigné d'approuver par là l'usurpation des Eglises et des benéfices ; mais il promet seulement de ne point permettre que ceux qui les ont usurpés soient troublés par des voies de fait, parceque cela ne se pourroit faire sans ruiner la tranquillité de ses états.

A l'égard du serment du *Test*, qui fait le second article de la déclaration du Roi : Il n'oblige S. M. à autre chose sinon à exclure des charges publiques ceux qui refuseront de faire un certain serment ; en quoi il n'y a point de difficulté puisqu'on peut vivre et humainement et chrétiennement sans avoir des charges.

Que si cela paroit rude aux Catholiques ils doivent considérer l'état où ils sont, et la petite portion qu'ils composent du royaume d'Angleterre, ce qui les oblige à n'exiger pas de leur Roi des conditions impossibles, et au contraire a sacrifier touts les avantages dont ils se pourroient flatter vainement, au bien réel et solide d'avoir un Roi de leur religion et d'affermir sur le thrône sa famille quoique Catholique, ce qui leur peut faire raisonnablement espérer, sinon d'abord, du moins dans la suite, l'entier rétablissement de l'Eglise et de la foy.

Que si on s'attache au contraire à vouloir faire la loi aux Protestants qui sont les maîtres, on perdra avec l'occasion de rétablir le Roi, non seulement touts les avantages qui sont attachés a ce rétablissement, mais encore touts les autres quels

qu'ils soient, et on s'exposera à toutes sortes de maux, étant bien certain que si les rebelles viennent à bout selon leurs desirs d'exclure tout-à fait le Roi, ils ne garderont aucune mesure envers les Catholiques, et ne songeront qu' a assouvir la haïne qu'ils leur portent.

Pour ces raisons je conclus non seulement que le Roi a pû en conscience faire la déclaration dont il s'agit, mais encore qu'il y étoit obligé, parcequ'il doit faire tout ce qui est possible pour l'avantage de l'Eglise et de ses sujets Catholiques auxquels rien ne peut-être meilleur dans la conjuncture présente que son rétablissement.

On doit même déjà regarder comme un grand avantage la déclaration qui fait S. M. *de recommander fortement à son parlement une impartiale liberté de conscience,* ce qui montre le zéle de ce Prince pour le répos de ses sujets Catholiques, et tout ensemble une favorable disposition pour eux dans ses sujet Protestants qui acceptent sa déclaration.

Je dirai donc volontiers aux Catholiques, s'il y en a qui n'approuvent pas la déclaration dont il s'agit:—*Noli esse justus multum: neque plus sapias quam necesse est, ne obstupescas.* Ecc. vii. 17.

Je ne doute point que N. S. P. le Pape n'appuie le Roi d'Angleterre dans l'execution d'une declaration qui étoit si nécessaire et ne juge bien des intentions d'un Prince qui a sacrifié trois royaumes, toute sa famille, et sa propre vie, à la religion Catholique. Je me soumet, néanmoins, de tout mon cœur à la suprème decision de S. S.

Fait à Meaux, ce 22 May, 1693.

✠ J. Bénigne, E de Meaux.

This opinion was to have been laid before the Pope through Cardinal de Janson Forbin, to whom both Bossuet and Lord

Melfort wrote for that purpose. But neither the letters nor the opinion were forwarded to Rome by Louis XIV.

The postscript in Lord Melfort's own hand is very curious. The errors of language are scrupulously preserved.

"Ce qu'il y a affaire n'est que pour EVITER LES CENSURES DE ROME, non pas pour faire examiner l'affaire, CE QU'IL FAUT EVITER ET PRINCIPALEMENT LES CONGREGATIONS, ce que sa Majesté souhaite estant de satisfaire sa Sainteté en particulier des nécessitiés soubs les quelles sa Majesté est tant a l'égard de son établissement que pour avoir la liberté de faire élever le Prince de Galles dans la religion Catholique, ce qui est un plus grand bien à la dit religion que aucun autre que puisse arriver. Il est aussi à considerer que sa Majesté a des assurances des principaux avec lesquelles elle a traité d'obtenir une liberté de conscience pour les Catholiques d'Angleterre, pourveu que sa Majesté ne le presse pas par son authorité, mais qu'il le laisse au Parliament. En fin celle cy j'entends LA DECLARATION N'EST QUE POUR RENTRER, ET L'ON PEUT BEAUCOUP MIEUX DISPUTER DES AFFAIRES DES CATHOLIQUES A WHITEHALL QU'A ST. GERMAIN."—Ib. p. 390.

C.—Page 65.

ALPHONSO DE CASTRO, AND THE FOURTH COUNCIL OF TOLEDO.

The task of defending the Roman Catholic Church from the charge of intolerance and persecution involves Mr. Butler in strange difficulties, and calls forth that light, skimming,

glancing manner of arguing which distinguishes that writer, and must make him a great favourite with the fair readers of his party. I dislike historical more than any other controversy, and have purposely abstained in the preceding pages from every topic that could lead me into the labyrinth of contradictory authorities where truth lies concealed, especially on points of ecclesiastical history. But as Mr. Butler has, by the way, discovered two hitherto unknown phenomena, a tolerant Spanish friar and a liberal Spanish Council, I, as a Spaniard, cannot pass these wonders unnoticed.

"It should not be forgotten," says Mr. Butler*, "that Alphonsus de Castro, a Spanish friar and confessor to Philip, in a sermon preached before the court, condemned these proceedings (the sanguinary persecutions of Mary) in the most pointed manner, as contrary both to the text and the spirit of the gospel." He said "that it was not by severity but by mildness that men were to be brought into the fold of Christ; and that it was not the duty of bishops to seek the death, but to instruct the ignorance of their misguided brethren."—"Many," says Dr. Lingard, "were at a loss to account for the discourse; whether it was the spontaneous effort of the friar, or had been suggested to him by the policy of Philip, or by the humanity of Cardinal Pole, or by the repugnance of the bishops—it made however a deep impression. The preacher was afterwards advanced to a bishopric in Spain."

This is a remarkable specimen of the art of weakening strong impressions by a crowd of new ones, vague, indefinite, and discordant. It is analogous (I beg my readers to pardon the homeliness of the illustration) to the mode in which rubbing and scratching in every direction, relieve some deep

* Page 203, 1st ed.

sensations of the skin. Four suppositions are suggested to account for the fact that a Spanish friar preached toleration in London under the sanguinary Mary. The reader, of course, will not stop to choose among them. He then finds that the sermon "made a deep impression," and the friar was advanced to a bishopric in Spain: the consequence is that, whereas he formerly believed that Spanish friars were the most horrible persecutors, he must now suspend his judgment; and who knows, but he may feel inclined to think that the shortest cut to a Spanish bishopric is a sermon on toleration?

But who was this mild, goodnatured friar—this Alphonsus de Castro?

Nicholas Antonio, in his *Bibliotheca Hispana Nova*, gives a pretty long article about him, of which I will only copy the notice of one of this meek friar's works.

"*De justa Hæreticorum punitione*, libri tres. Salmanticæ, 1547. in fol. ex officina Joannis Giuntæ. Lugduni, 1556, in 8, apud hæredes Jacobi Junctæ. Antuerpiæ apud Steelsii hæredes 1568 in 8. *ut confirmaret justas esse omnes illas pœnas, quibus in jure civili atque canonico hæritici addicuntur.*"

Such was the man that proclaimed forbearance from the pulpit, in the presence of those two notorious tyrants, Philip and Mary. He, indeed, exhibits one of the numerous instances of that mixed spirit of fierce intolerance, and accommodating casuistry, to which men grow prone under the tuition of Popes and Cardinals. It was certainly not the spirit of Christian meekness that produced the extraordinary contradiction which appears between Castro's works, in Spain, and his sermon, in London; but the same ambitious views of Philip, which made him endeavour to acquire popularity by protecting the Lady Elizabeth from the spite of the Queen, and by procuring the release of Lord Henry Dudley, Sir

George Harper, Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, and many others, who, as Hume observes, had been confined, from the suspicions or resentments of the court.

I have, in the next place, to show the true character of that *liberal* Council of Toledo, whose open profession of toleration is so triumphantly adduced by the advocate of the Roman Catholic church. "The fourth Council of Toledo had declared," says Mr. Butler, "that it was unlawful and unchristianlike to force people to believe, seeing it is God alone who hardens and shows mercy to whom he will." A noble declaration, indeed, to come from the seat of one of the Spanish inquisitions! But when did this humane Council meet, and what was its general character? Did it apply this broad principle to every dissenting sect? Did it really anticipate the Protestants in the recognition of the right of *private judgment* in matters of faith? Our author will not deprive his cause of the chance that his readers will answer all these questions in the sense most favourable to the object for which the quotation is made. I will, however, deal more explicitly upon these points.

The fourth Council of Toledo was held in the year of our Lord, 634. Mariana, the Spanish historian, says that Sisenand (an usurper who, with the aid of Dagobert, king of France, had deposed Swinthila) "convened from all parts of his dominions about seventy bishops, at Toledo, under colour of reforming the morals of the ecclesiastics, which the troubles of the times had greatly depraved; but with the real object that the fathers should condemn Swinthila, as unworthy of the crown, and by this means, both his open followers and secret friends might be made to change their minds and be quiet*." It is probable that this holy council, finding it ne-

* Mariana, Book vi. c. 5.

cessary to allay the alarm of the Jews, whose wealth was for many centuries the best resource of the Spanish kings, was induced to pass the decree in *their favour*, which Mr. Butler gives us as an unlimited declaration in behalf of all dissenters from the Church of Rome. Numbers of that persecuted people had been forced to receive baptism by a law of Sisebute. This law alone is repealed by the fourth Council of Toledo. Had Mr. Butler either read the original decrees, or wished to state the whole matter without curtailment, the character of his church would have gained little from the *liberality* of the Toletan fathers. Indeed the same canon of the Council, which favours the world with the comprehensive principles of toleration which have been adduced as a parallel to the most liberal concessions of the Protestants on that point, declares that the *Jews who were baptized by force* should be compelled to the observance of Christianity. I will subjoin the whole decree:

Canon. 55. "De Judæis autem hoc præcepit sancta synodus nemini deinceps ad credendum vim inferre. Cui enim vult Deus miseretur, et quem vult indurat. Non enim tales inviti salvandi sunt, sed volentes, ut integra sit forma justitiæ. Sicut enim homo propriâ arbitrii voluntate serpenti obediens, periit sic (vocante se gratiâ Dei) propriæ mentis conversione quisque credendo, salvatur. Ergo non vi, sed libera arbitrii facultate ut convertantur suadendi sunt non potius impellendi. *Qui autem jam pridem ad Christianitatem venire coacti sunt (sicut factum est temporibus religiosissimi principis Sisebuti) quia jam constat eos sacramentis divinis associatos, et baptismi gratium suscepisse, et chrismate unctos esse, et corporis Domini, et sanguinis extitisse participes; oportet ut fidem* ETIAM QUAM VI VEL NECESSITATE SUSCEPERUNT *tenere cogantur, ne nomen Domini*

*blasphemetur; et fides quam susceperunt contemptibilis habeatur**."

But I have in reserve a string of tender mercies, such as flowed from the tolerant principle of the liberal Council of Toledo. They are recorded in the same page with the proclamation of mental freedom, by which the apologist of Rome has stopped the mouths of those who charge his church with intolerance.

The models of Roman Catholic liberality, having in the 55th canon forbidden the Jews baptized by force, to return to their religion, proceed in the 60th to provide for the spiritual safety of children born of unconverted parents, from whom they are directed to be taken away, and placed in convents. *Judæorum filios vel filias, ne parentum ultro involvantur erroribus, ab eorum consortio separari decernimus.* The forced converts are then made the objects of the Council's anxiety. To prevent the secret exercise of their national practices, all intercourse between them and their unconverted brethren is made punishable, by making the unbaptized parties slaves to the Christians, and putting the offending neophytes to death. *Nulla igitur ultra communio sit Hebræis ad fidem Christianam translatis, cum his qui adhuc in vetere ritu consistunt; ne forte eorum participatione subvertantur. Quicumque igitur amodo ex his qui baptizati sunt, infidelium consortia non vitaverint; et hi*

* The Spaniard, Carranza, not satisfied with the inquisitorial force authorized by the latter part of this canon, took care to omit, in his *Summa Conciliorum*, the words, "Ergo non vi, sed libera arbitrii facultate ut convertantur suadendi sunt, non potius impellendi." Yet Carranza himself was suspected and imprisoned by the Inquisition. My transcript of this and following canons is from the Collection of the Jesuits, Labbé and Gossart, vol. v. p. 1720.

Christianis donentur, et illi publicis cædibus deputentur. Finally, the 63d canon orders that Jews married to Christian women be divorced from their wives, unless they submit to be baptized.

There is a sacred duty incumbent on every man who appears as an author before the public, which the writer of the *Book of the Roman Catholic Church* has, I fear, often overlooked in his work; but seldom more openly than in the present instance. The best excuse is, that the apologist of Rome has copied from others; but dishonesty lies somewhere: the garbled statement comes, no doubt, from among the writers of the Roman Catholic communion who have lately appeared before the British public. Am I not therefore justified in earnestly saying to that public—Beware!

D.—Page 78.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

An accurate and detailed history of the rise and gradual progress of the doctrine of Transubstantiation, would be a valuable contribution to the philosophy of the human mind. What appears to me most deserving the attention of philosophical observers, is the *concurrence* of two perfectly unconnected errors, in giving birth to this intellectual monster.

The natural propensity of mankind to refer their worship of the invisible to the symbols employed to express it, is found even among the early Christians. A great reverence for the bread and wine, which, in the words of the Saviour, were called his flesh

and blood, far from being to blame in them, must be viewed as a direct consequence of the certainty they possessed, that the Eucharist had been established by the Son of God. But here the usual process of the vulgar mind began. Abstractions and distinctions are difficult and painful to the generality of mankind. The spiritual presence of Christ, the intimate connexion between an external and simple act of eating and drinking, and the influence of his grace on the soul of those who eat and drink by faith in his death and passion, was soon lost sight of. Though Christ himself had declared that "the flesh profiteth nothing," the bread and wine gradually assumed the character of his material flesh and blood. Yet neither the people nor their leaders were able to use any definite language upon the mysterious work of consecration.

It happened, however, in the metaphysical ages (such name, I believe, would suit the period between the twelfth and the sixteenth centuries) that every system which successively occupied the attention of the schools, had an effect not unlike that which is now produced by physical discoveries, though upon very dissimilar objects. A newly discovered law or power of nature, in our days, puts the whole mass of European intellect into motion: a thousand applications are tried, ten thousand hopes of improvement are raised, till the effervescence is sobered down by experience and failure. A new metaphysical system produced in those times a similar state of mind, among the class who pursued abstract knowledge, with regard to the objects of their favourite studies, and that without any thing to check it. Platonism first, and then Aristotleism, were believed to be sufficient to explain every mystery in theology. The success, however, of the latter was unrivalled in defining, explaining, and demonstrating the as yet indistinct and fluctuating theory of the Eucharist.

One of the doctrines introduced by the Aristotelian system of the school, is that of *substantial forms*, or *absolute accidents**. The schoolmen suppose that the universe consists of a mass of matter, invested by certain forms or qualities, which possess a real and *substantial* being. This was a lucky discovery for the school divines. It explained the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament. The *substance* of the bread and wine, they said, is converted into his body and blood; but the *absolute accidents*, the *substantial forms* of both, remain as before. Hence the word *transubstantiation*.

The idea of a general mass shaped by these *substantial* forms or moulds, is so agreeable to the external impressions of mankind, and so analogous to the operations by which what we call materials are converted into objects fitted for peculiar uses; that the words in which the school philosophers expressed them, have been incorporated with all the European languages †.

That the doctrine of *transubstantiation* could not have been established without the aid of Aristotle, any one who examines the technical words of the Roman Catholic divines upon that question, will readily perceive. Of this they were so fully

* The schoolmen have foisted many of their absurdities upon the Greek philosopher. From the definition which Aristotle gives of matter, it is evident that he considered that word as the sign of an abstraction. "Materia est neque quid, neque quantum, nec aliud eorum quibus ens denominatur." I quote the translation used among the schoolmen.

† It is curious to trace to the same source even the word *elements*, which seems to have been chosen by the Protestants as the most independent from the theory of transubstantiation. *Elements* is another scholastic name for that substratum which is conceived to bear the qualities of things. "Omnium *elementa* possunt invicem in se transmutari, non generatione, sed alteratione." The bread and wine were *elements*, because they were supposed to be changed into the body and blood of Christ. See Brucker, Hist. Philos. Pars II. Lib. II. c. vii.

convinced but a short time ago, that I recollect the opposition to which the modern system of natural philosophy was still subject in my youth, as depriving the Roman Catholic faith of its chief support, by the rejection of the *substantial* forms. Indeed *transubstantiation* conveys either no meaning at all, or one entirely the reverse of what Rome intends; unless we suppose the separableness of *substance*, and forms or qualities. The *substance* of the bread and wine, it is said, is converted into the body and blood of Christ; which, translated into any language but that of the schools, means that the body of Christ (I wish to speak reverently), chemically analyzed in the consecrated bread and wine, will be found to consist of every thing that constitutes bread and wine: *i. e.* the body and blood of Christ will be found to have been converted into real bread and wine. What else do we designate by bread and by wine, but two aggregates of qualities, identical to what the analytical process will show after consecration? Substance without qualities is a mere abstraction of the mind; with qualities, it is that which the qualities make it. So here we have a mighty miracle to convert Christ into bread and wine; for such would be the substance of his body and blood if it changed its qualities for those of the two well known compounds which the Roman Catholics adore. If it is said that Christ occupies the place of the bread and wine, and produces the impressions peculiar to them on the senses, the supposed miracle should change the name of *transubstantiation* into that of *delusion*.—Surely transubstantiation has for its basis the most absurd philosophical system which ever disgraced the schools of a barbarous age!

E.—Page 96.

UNCERTAINTY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC INFALLIBILITY.

Nothing can be more *certain* than the uncertainty of the Roman Catholic Church, as to the seat and source of her pretended infallibility. If any thing can be deduced from the vague and unsettled principles of her divines, on this subject, it would appear that infallibility finally resolves itself into the authority of the Pope. For, as no council whatever is deemed infallible till the Pope has sanctioned its decrees, the pretended assistance from heaven must apply to that discriminating oracle, on whose decision the supernatural authority of the councils depends.

The opening speech of the papal legates who presided at the council of Trent represents the expected inspiration as conditional: a very natural caution in the representatives of that see, which has always most strenuously opposed the notion that the Pope is inferior to a general council. After a candid acknowledgment of the enormous corruptions of the Roman Catholic clergy, which the reader will find hereafter, the legates speak of the expected inspiration in the following words:—

"Quare nisi ille spiritus nos apud nos metipsos primum condemnaverit, nondum illum ingressum esse ad nos affirmare possumus, ac ne ingressurum quidem, si peccata nostra audire recusamus. Idem enim dicetur nobis, quod populo veteri per prophetam Ezechielem est dictum, cum nondum agnitis suis sceleribus, Dominum per prophetam interrogare vellent. *Venerunt viri Israel ad interrogandum Dominum, et sederunt*

coram me. Hæc autem dicit Dominus: numquid ad interrogandum me venistis? Vivo ego, dicit Dominus, quia non respondebo vobis. Sequitur autem, *si judicas eos, abominationes patrum illorum ostende illis.* In quibus verbis ostendit Deus, quare noluerit respondere illis, quia nondum scilicet abominationes suas et patrum suorum audierant. Quare cum idem Dei Spiritus sit, qui tunc dabat responsa, et quem nunc nos sedentes coram Domino invocamus, quid nobis faciendum sit, ut propria responsa habeamus, ex his videtis . . . . Quia vero nonnullos nunc videmus, sua primum peccata, et nostri ordinis graviter deflentes, atque Dei misericordiam omnibus votis implorantes, ideo quidem in *maxima spe sumus,* advenisse, quem invocamus, Dei Spiritum."—Concilia per Labbeum et Gossartium, Tom. XIV. p. 738.

It is clear that the legates grounded their hopes of inspiration for the Council, on the marks of repentance which they perceived in some of its members. Must then Roman Catholics ascertain the spiritual condition of their oracles, before they admit them to the privilege of infallibility? It should seem, however, that the Popes are not subject to such restrictions in the use of their infallible sanction; else, a man with the moral tact of Alexander VI. would have been subject to strange mistakes, in calculating the fitness of the bishops in council, to receive an inspiration totally dependent on moral character,

F.—Page 123.

CASE OF A SPANISH PROTESTANT PRIEST, IMPRISONED BY THE INQUISITION IN 1802.

Since the execution of the unhappy woman whose death I mention in the 5th Letter, the Spanish Inquisitors seemed less disposed to shed blood. It is also true that men were also much more averse to sacrifice their lives to their religious views, than at the time of the Reformation. Spain, which in the 16th century gave a host of martyrs to Protestant Christianity*, has, of late, produced but one instance of the power of the Scriptures "in an honest and good heart." This most interesting case is related by the secretary of the Inquisition of Madrid, Llorente, in his History of the Spanish Inquisition, Vol. IV. p. 127.

Don Miguel Juan Antonio Solano, a native of Verdun, in Arragon, was vicar of Esco, in the diocese of Jaca. His benevolence and exemplary conduct endeared him to his parishioners. Though educated according to the Aristotelian system, and the school divinity, which was very lately prevalent at many of the Spanish universities; the natural strength of his mind led him to study pure mathematics, and mechanics, by himself. The goodness of his heart combined with his inventive talents in the work of fertilizing a dale, or rather a mere ravine, belonging to the inhabitants of his parish, which lay waste for want of irrigation. Without any help

* See Art. 9 of No. 57 of the *Quarterly Review*, in which the author of the present work gave an account of the Spanish Reformers, and their sufferings.

from the government, and with no mechanical means but the spades of the peasants, he succeeded in diverting the waters of a mountain streamlet upon the slip of vegetable soil which had been deposited in the glen.

A long and severe illness, which made him a cripple for life, withdrew the good vicar of Esco from these active pursuits, and limited his employment to the perusal of the few books which his little library afforded. Fortunately the Bible was one of them. Solano read the records of revelation with a sincere desire to embrace religious truth, as he found it there; and having gradually cleared and arranged his views, drew up a little system of divinity, which agreed in the main points with fundamental tenets of the Protestant churches. His conviction of the Roman Catholic errors became so strong, that he determined to lay his book before the bishop of the diocese, asking his pastoral help and advice upon that most important subject. An answer to his arguments was promised; but despairing after a lapse of time to obtain it, Solano applied to the faculty of divinity of the University of Saragossa. The reverend doctors sent the book to the Inquisition, and the infirm vicar of Esco was lodged in the prisons of the holy tribunal of Saragossa. This happened in 1802. It seems that some humane persons contrived his escape soon after, and conveyed him to Oleron, the nearest French town. But Solano, having taken time to consider his case, came to the heroic resolution of asserting the truth in the very face of death; and returned of his own accord to the inquisitorial prisons.

The Inquisitor General, at that time, was Arce, archbishop of Santiago, an intimate friend of the Prince of Peace; and one strongly suspected of secret infidelity. When the sentence of the Aragonese tribunal, condemning Solano to die by fire, was presented to the supreme court for confirmation, Arce,

shocked at the idea of an auto-da-fe, contrived every method to delay the execution. A fresh examination of witnesses was ordered; during which the inquisitors entreated Solano to avert his now imminent danger. Nothing, however, could move him. He said he well knew the death that awaited him; but no human fear would ever make him swerve from the truth. The first sentence being confirmed, nothing remained but the *exequatur* of the *supreme*. Arce, however, suspended it, and ordered an inquiry into the mental sanity of the prisoner. As nothing appeared to support this plea, Solano would have died at the stake, had not Providence snatched him from the hands of the papal defenders of the faith. A dangerous illness seized him in the prison, where he had lingered three years. The efforts to convert him were, on this occasion, renewed with increased ardour. "The inquisitors," says Llorente, "gave it in charge to the most able divines of Saragossa to reclaim Solano; and even requested Don Miguel Suarez de Santander, auxiliary bishop of that town, and apostolic missionary (now, like myself, a refugee in France), to exhort him, with all the tenderness and goodness of a Christian minister, which are so natural to that worthy prelate. The vicar showed a grateful sense of all that was done for him; but declared that he could not renounce his religious persuasion without offending God by acting treacherously against the truth. On the twenty-first day of his illness, the physician warned him of approaching death, urging him to improve the short time which he had to live. 'I am in the hands of God,' answered Solano, 'and have nothing else to do.' Thus died, in 1805, the vicar of Esco. He was denied Christian burial, and his body privately interred within the inclosure of the Inquisition, near the back-gate of the building, towards the Ebro. The inquisitors reported all that had taken place to the supreme

tribunal, whose members approved their conduct, and stopt further proceedings, in order to avoid the necessity of burning the deceased, in effigy."

H.—Page 127.

The account of nuns and friars which Erasmus gives in the dialogue from which I borrowed the passage in the text, so perfectly agrees with all I know of them—the arts by which girls are now drawn into monasteries are so similar to those which he describes—and the reasons he uses to dissuade the young enthusiast from sacrificing her liberty, are so applicable to every case of that kind in our days, that I hope the reader will pardon me for inserting the whole dialogue, in the elegant translation of my excellent friend the Rev. Robert Butler; to whom I am also indebted for the following notice of the alarm which those delightful compositions, the Colloquies, excited in the University of Paris.

"The faculty of theology passed a general censure in 1526 upon the Colloquies of Erasmus, as upon a work in which the fasts and abstinences of the Church of Rome are slighted, the suffrages of the Holy Virgin and of the saints are derided, virginity is set below matrimony, Christians are discouraged from monkery, and grammatical is preferred to theological erudition. Therefore it is decreed that the perusal of this wicked book be forbidden to all, more especially to young folks; and that it be entirely suppressed if it be possible."—*From Dupin, as quoted in Jortin's History of Erasmus, Vol. I. p.* 298.

ERASMUS'S DIALOGUE, ENTITLED VIRGO ΜΙΣΟΓΑΜΟΣ, OR THE MARRIAGE-HATING MAIDEN.

Eubulus.—Catharine.

Eu. I rejoice that dinner is at last over, and that we are at leisure to enjoy this delightful walk.

Ca. It was quite wearisome to sit so long at table.

Eu. How every thing smiles around us! Truly this is the very youth and spring-time of the world.

Ca. It is so, indeed!

Eu. And why is it not with thee also the spring-time of smiles and joy?

Ca. Wherefore do you ask such a question?

Eu. Because I perceive a sadness in your countenance.

Ca. Are my looks then different from what they are wont to be?

Eu. Would you like me to show you to yourself?

Ca. Of all things.

Eu. You see this rose. Observe how, as the night approaches, it contracts its leaves.

Ca. Well! and what then?

Eu. It thus presents you with an image of your own countenance.

Ca. A most excellent comparison!

Eu. If you will not believe me, look at yourself in this little fountain. Those frequent sighs, too, during dinner—tell me what could be the meaning of them?

Ca. Question me no farther. The subject is one in which you are not concerned.

Eu. Nay, Catharine: it cannot but concern one whose

happiness is bound up in thine. Another sigh? Alas! how deeply drawn!

Ca. My mind is in a state of great anxiety; but I cannot safely mention the cause.

Eu. What! not even to him who loves thee better than he loves his own sister? Fear not, dearest Catharine; let the secret of thy affliction be what it may, rest assured that it is safe in my keeping.

Ca. That may be; but I should tell it to one who would give me no assistance.

Eu. How know you that? I might, at least, have it in my power to aid you by advice and consolation.

Ca. I cannot tell thee.

Eu. How is this? You hate me, then, Catharine.

Ca. Yes; if I can hate my own brother; and yet I cannot bring myself to tell thee.

Eu. Should I be able to guess the cause of your suffering, will you confess it? Nay, do not turn away: promise me, or else I will never cease to importune thee.

Ca. Well, I promise.

Eu. I do not at all understand what can be wanting to make you perfectly happy.

Ca. O that my condition were really such as you conceive it to be!

Eu. In the first place, you are in the flower of your age; for if I mistake not, you are now in your seventeenth year.

Ca. Just so.

Eu. The apprehension then of old age cannot, I suppose, be the source of your trouble?

Ca. Nothing in the world troubles me less.

Eu. You have a form that is perfect in every part; and this is one of God's chief gifts.

Ca. Of my form, such as it is, I neither boast nor complain.

Eu. Then your colour and habit of body indicate that you are in sound health—unless indeed you carry about you some secret disease.

Ca. Nothing of the kind, I thank God.

Eu. Your character moreover is unspotted.

Ca. I trust so.

Eu. You have a mind also worthy of the body wherein it dwells; a mind of the happiest disposition, and as apt as I could desire for every liberal pursuit and study.

Ca. Whatever it may be, it is the gift of God.

Eu. Neither is there any want of that loveliest grace of moral excellence, the absence of which is too often to be regretted in forms of the most perfect beauty.

Ca. It is certainly my desire that my behaviour should be such as becomes my situation.

Eu. Many are dejected in mind on account of the infelicity of their birth; but you, on the contrary, have parents of honourable descent and of virtuous manners—possessed also of an ample fortune, and attached to you with the fondest affection.

Ca. I have nothing, in this respect, to complain of.

Eu. In a word, of all the maidens in this neighbourhood there is not one (were some propitious star to shine upon me) whom I would choose for a wife but thee.

Ca. And I, if I had any wish to marry, would desire no other husband than thyself.

Eu. Surely then it must be something very extraordinary which can occasion you so much trouble?

Ca. Something of no light moment, be assured.

Eu. Will you not take it ill if I divine what it is?

CA. I have already promised not to do so.

EU. Well then, experience has taught me what pain there is in love. Come, confess, according to your promise.

CA. To say the truth, love is the cause; but not the kind of love you mean.

EU. What kind then?

CA. Divine love.

EU. I have done; my stock of conjecture is exhausted: and yet I will not let go this hand of thine till I wrest thy secret from thee.

CA. How violent you are!

EU. Only confide it to me, whatever it may be.

CA. Well, since you are so very urgent about it, I will tell you. Know then, that from my tenderest years a passion of an extraordinary nature has possessed me.

EU. What can it be? to become a nun?

CA. Just so.

EU. Hem! I have gained a loss!

CA. What is it you say, Eubulus?

EU. Nothing, my love: I only coughed. Go on, I pray you.

CA. The desire I have mentioned to you was always opposed by my parents with the greatest pertinacity.

EU. I understand.

CA. On the other hand, I, for my part, never ceased to besiege their affection with entreaties, caresses, and tears.

EU. You surprise me.

CA. At length my perseverance in this course so far prevailed upon them that they promised that, if I should continue in the same mind upon my entering into my seventeenth year, they would then yield to my wishes: that year is now arrived; my desire remains unchanged; and yet, in opposition

to their promise they positively refuse to gratify it: this it is that troubles me. I have now disclosed to you the nature of my disease: prescribe the remedy if you have any.

Eu. In the first place, let me counsel you, sweetest maiden, to moderate your desires; and if you cannot obtain what you would, to wish for no more than what may be in your power to obtain.

Ca. I shall die if I do not obtain the present object of my wishes.

Eu. But what could have given rise to this fatal passion?

Ca. Some years ago, when quite a girl, I was taken into a convent, where they led me about and showed me every thing. I was charmed with the sweet looks of the nuns, who seemed to me like so many angels; and was delighted with the beautiful appearance of every thing in the chapel, and with the fragrance and pleasantness of gardens, dressed and cultivated with the nicest art. In short, whichever way I turned my eyes, every thing smiled upon me. Add to this, the pleasant conversation I had with the nuns themselves, some of whom I discovered to have been my playfellows during my childhood. From this period it was that I conceived the ardent desire I have to adopt the same kind of life.

Eu. It certainly is not my intention to reprobate the institution of nunneries*, though the same things are not of equal advantage to all; and yet, from my opinion of the nature of your disposition, such as it appears to me from your countenance and manners, my advice to you would be, to marry a husband of a character similar to your own, and thus give rise to a new

* "... Mihi aliud dictabat animus, aliud scribebat calamus," is the melancholy acknowledgment which Erasmus made of his own want of courage.

society at home, of which your husband should be the father and yourself the mother.

Ca. I will rather die than give up my purpose.

Eu. A virgin life, if purity attend it, is no doubt an excellent thing; but it does not require you so to bind yourself to a particular convent as to be unable afterwards to leave it. Surely, you may live at home with your parents, and preserve at the same time your virgin honour?

Ca. True; but not with equal safety.

Eu. In my opinion, you will preserve it there much more securely than amongst so many fat and bloated monks:—fathers they are called, and fathers they not unfrequently are, in more senses than one. Remember also, that in former times young maidens were considered to live nowhere more honourably than at home with their parents; nor had they any father, according to the religious sense of the word, except the bishop. But tell me, I beseech you, what nunnery is it that you have fixed upon as the place of your servitude and seclusion?

Ca. The Chrysertian.

Eu. I know it. It is close to your father's house.

Ca. Just so.

Eu. And well, too, do I know the whole of the worthy fraternity for which you would give up father and mother and the excellent family to which you are related. As for the patriarch of this venerable society, he has long been foolish, both from infirmities of age and nature, and from indulgence in the pleasures of the table. His knowledge is now confined to his bottle. He has two companions, John and Jodocus, both worthy of him. John, though not perhaps a bad man, has nevertheless nothing of the man about him but his beard—not one grain of learning, and a very slender stock of prudence.

As for Jodocus, he is so stupid, that, if it were not for the recommendation of his sacred dress, he might walk about in public, in the cap and bells of a fool.

Ca. They seem to me, however, to be very good men.

Eu. My dear Catharine, I know them better than you can do. But I suppose that these are your patrons with your father and mother;—the persons who would make you their proselyte?

Ca. Jodocus is very favourable to my wishes.

Eu. Oh! worthy patron! But let it be granted that these men are now both learned and good, it will not be long before you will find them both ignorant and wicked; and you will, moreover, have to bear with everyone that meets you.

Ca. The frequent entertainments that are given at home are very disagreeable to me; nor is every thing that is spoken there between those who are married, such as is suitable to a maiden's ear: besides, I cannot sometimes refuse a kiss.

Eu. They, who would avoid every thing that can give offence, must needs depart out of this life altogether. Our ears must be accustomed to hear every thing, but transmit to the mind only what is good. Your parents, I suppose, allow you a private chamber?

Ca. Certainly.

Eu. Thither, then, you may retire, if any entertainment should happen to become disorderly. There, while the rest are drinking and trifling, do you hold holy converse with Christ, your spouse; praying, singing, and giving thanks. Your father's house cannot defile you; while you, on the contrary, may impart to it a character of greater sanctity.

Ca. Yet, it is safer to be in a convent of nuns.

Eu. I say nothing against a society of such nuns as are

truly virgins; but I wish you not to be deceived by your imagination, and take appearances for realities. Were you to remain for some time in the convent you wish to retire to, and acquire a nearer insight into what is going forward there, possibly you might not think every thing quite so correct and charming as you did at first. Take my word for it, Catharine, all are not virgins who wear a veil.

CA. Use proper language, Eubulus!

EU. Nay, if there be propriety in truth, I do so; unless, perhaps, the praise which we have hitherto been in the habit of considering as peculiar to the Virgin Mother be transferred to other females also.

CA. Mention not such an abomination.

EU. In no other way, however, can the virgins you speak of be altogether such as you take them to be.

CA. No? and why not, I pray you?

EU. Because there are more amongst them who will be found to rival Sappho in her morals, than to resemble her in her genius.

CA. I do not exactly comprehend the meaning of your words.

EU. My dear Catharine, I do not wish that you should; and therefore I talk in the way you hear me.

CA. My wishes still point in the same direction, and I cannot but conclude that the spirit by which I am actuated on this subject comes from God, inasmuch as it has continued for so many years, and still gathers strength from day to day.

EU. For my part, I regard this spirit of thine with no small degree of suspicion, on account of its being opposed with so much earnestness by your excellent parents. Were the object you have in view really a pious one, God would no doubt breathe into their hearts an acquiescence in your wishes. The

fact is, that the spirit you talk of took its rise from the splendid things which affected your imagination as a girl, from the soft language of the nuns, from revived affection towards your old companions, from the celebration of divine worship, the specious pomp of ceremonies, and the vile exhortations of a set of stupid monks, who court you in order that they may have the more to drink. They are well aware that your father is of a kind and liberal disposition, and that they shall either have him for their guest, (on condition that he bring with him wine enough for ten potent drinkers), or that they shall be able to carouse, as they please, at his table. Wherefore, my advice to you is, not to think any farther of venturing upon a new course of life in opposition to the wishes of your parents. Remember that the authority of our parents is that under which it is God's will that we should remain.

Ca. But in a case of this kind, it is no want of piety to disregard both father and mother.

Eu. I grant that it is piety to do so on some occasions, for Christ's sake; though if a Christian have a father who is a heathen, and whose whole subsistence depends upon him, it certainly is no mark of piety in the son to desert him, and allow him to perish of hunger. Supposing that you had not already professed yourself a Christian at your baptism, and that your parents were to forbid you to be baptized, you would certainly act a pious part in preferring Christ to impious parents: or, even now, if your parents were to endeavour to force you to the commission of any loose or impious act, you would undoubtedly do right, in such a case, to disregard their authority. But what has this to do with a convent? Christ is with you equally at home. It is the dictate of nature that children should obey their parents—a dictate ratified by the approbation of God, by the exhortations of St. Paul, and by

the sanction of human laws: and will you then withdraw yourself from the authority of the excellent parents you possess, in order to deliver yourself up to those who can be father and mother to you only in name, or who, to speak more truly, will rule you rather as tyrants than as parents? At present, your situation with your parents is such, that they still wish you to be free; but you, of your own accord, would make yourself a slave. The merciful nature of the Christian religion has, to a great degree, abolished the ancient state of servitude, except in a few countries, in which some traces of it still remain. But now, under the pretext of religion, a new kind of servitude, according to the mode of living that at present prevails in many convents, has been invented. In these places nothing is lawful but what is commanded: whatever wealth may fall to you will accrue to the community; and should you attempt to stir a step beyond your bounds, you will be dragged back again, as if you had murdered your parents. And, that this slavery may be still more conspicuous, their proselytes are clothed in a dress different from that which was given to them by their parents, while, in imitation of the ancient custom of those who formerly made a traffic in slaves, a change also is made in the baptismal name; so that he who was baptized into the service of Christ under the name of Peter, is called Thomas on being enlisted in the service of St. Dominic. If a soldier in the army cast away the uniform given him by his commander, he is looked upon as having renounced the authority of his commander; and yet we applaud those who put on a dress not given by Christ, the Lord of all; while the punishment inflicted upon them, should they change it afterwards, is far greater than would be experienced were they to cast off, ever so frequently, the dress of their great Leader and Master—I mean, innocence of mind.

Ca. They make a great merit, however, of thus voluntarily submitting to this kind of servitude.

Eu. They who do so, preach a doctrine worthy of the Pharisees. St. Paul's doctrine is a very different one; for he teaches that whoever becomes a Christian when in a state of freedom, should not willingly be made a slave: while, on the other hand, the slave who becomes a Christian, should, if an opportunity of freedom presents itself, avail himself of it. But, farther, the servitude we are speaking of is the more galling from your having to submit to more masters than one, and these, too, for the most part fools and profligates; while, in addition to this, you are kept in a state of continual uncertainty from the changes that occur amongst them from time to time. Now, answer me a question,—Do the laws release you from the authority of your parents?

Ca. By no means.

Eu. Are you at liberty to buy or sell a farm against their will?

Ca. Certainly not.

Eu. What right, then, can you have to give yourself to I know not whom, in express opposition to the will of your parents? Are you not their most valuable possession—that which is in a peculiar sense their own?

Ca. Where religion is concerned, the laws of nature cease.

Eu. Religion has respect chiefly to baptism; the present question relates merely to a change of dress, and to a mode of life which in itself is neither good nor bad. Consider, also, how many advantages you part with when you lose your liberty. You are now free to read, pray, or sing, in your own chamber, as much and as long as may be agreeable to you; or, when you become weary of the privacy of your chamber, you have it in your power to hear sacred songs, attend divine wor-

ship, and listen to discourses on heavenly themes. Moreover, should you meet with any one remarkable for his piety and wisdom, or with any matron or maiden of superior virtues and endowments, you can enjoy the advantage of their conversation and instructions, for improvement in all those graces that become the female character. You are free, besides, to esteem and love the preacher who teaches in sincerity the pure doctrines of Christ. But if once you retire into a convent, all these superior opportunities of improvement in a sound and rational piety are lost to you for ever.

Ca. But, in the mean time, I shall not be a nun.

Eu. Is it possible that you can still be influenced by the sound of a mere name? Consider the subject with attention. Much is said about the merit of obedience; but will there be any want of this merit if you obey those parents whom the ordinance of God himself has made it your duty to obey—if you obey also your bishop and your pastor? Or will you be deficient in the merit of poverty, where every thing belongs to your parents? In former times, indeed, holy men thought it highly praiseworthy in females, dedicated to the service of God, to be liberal towards the poor; yet I do not very well perceive how they were to exercise this virtue of liberality, if they had nothing themselves to give. Further, the jewel of your chastity can suffer no diminution in its lustre by your remaining under the same roof with your parents. In what, then, consists the superiority of the state for which you are so eager to leave your own home? truly, in nothing but a veil, a linen dress worn outside instead of inside, and a few ceremonies which of themselves make nothing for piety, and commend no one in the sight of Him with whom favour can be obtained only by purity of heart and life.

Ca. You preach strange doctrine.

Eu. Not the less true, however, for being strange. But, tell me, since you are not released from the authority of your parents, and you have not a right to sell either a dress or a field, how can you prove that you have a right to put yourself under the perpetual control of strangers?

Ca. The authority of parents, they say, cannot prevent the claims of religion.

Eu. Did you not make profession of your faith in your baptism?

Ca. Yes.

Eu. And are not they religious persons who follow the precepts of Jesus Christ?

Ca. Undoubtedly.

Eu. Then what, I pray you, is this new religion which makes void what the law of nature has sanctioned,—what the ancient law has taught, what the gospel has approved, and the doctrine of the apostles established and confirmed? I tell you, that such a religion is the invention of a parcel of monks, not the decree of God.

Ca. Do you then think it unlawful for me to become the spouse of Christ without the consent of my parents?

Eu. You are already espoused to Christ—we have all been espoused to him; and who, I pray you, ever thinks of being married twice to the same person? The subject in debate is merely a question of place, dress, and ceremony; and certainly I cannot think that the authority of parents is to be slighted and set at nought for things like these.

Ca. But the persons I speak of affirm, that there cannot be an act of greater piety than to disregard one's parents on such an occasion.

Eu. Demand, then, of those doctors, to produce you a single passage out of the holy scriptures in which any such

doctrine is taught. If they cannot do this, then require of them to quaff off a cup of good Burgundy—you will find them at no loss on such a subject. It is the part of true piety to fly to Christ for succour from wicked parents; but what piety can there be in flying from virtuous parents to a convent,—when to do this (as experience often shows) is but to fly from the good to the bad? Indeed, in former times, when a person was converted to the Christian faith, his parents, though idolaters, were still considered to have a claim on his obedience, as long as that obedience involved no compromise of his conscience and his faith.

Ca. Do you then condemn the life of a nun altogether?

Eu. By no means: but as I should not willingly advise any who have entered upon such a mode of life to seek a release from it, so I have no hesitation in earnestly exhorting every maiden, especially such as are of a noble and generous nature, to take care how they heedlessly place themselves in a state from which it will be impossible for them afterwards to retreat: more particularly as, in the places I allude to, a virgin's honour is not unfrequently exposed to the greatest danger; and as nothing, moreover, is done there, but what can be as well accomplished at home.

Ca. I cannot but confess that the arguments with which you have pressed your point are both numerous and weighty; yet my desire continues unchanged and unchangeable.

Eu. Well, if I cannot succeed in persuading you to act as I wish, bear this at least in mind, that Eubulus gave you good counsel. In the mean while I will pray, from the love I bear you, that this passion of yours may be attended with better fortune than my advice.

I.—Page 128.

TYRANNICAL CONDUCT OF THE CHURCH OF ROME TOWARDS PERSONS OF BOTH SEXES BOUND BY RELIGIOUS VOWS.

The history of religious oppression under the Church of Rome is far from being well known. That, under her spiritual government, Christianity has at all times contributed towards the happiness of mankind, I am ready to acknowledge; because no human power can completely quench the healing spirit of the gospel. But it would be difficult, indeed, to ascertain whether the at once gloomy and pompous superstition which, under the guidance of the popes, has been so intimately blended with Christianity, has not produced more bitterness of suffering in the human breast, than even the hope of immortality can allay. Woe to the ardent and sincere, amongst the spiritual subjects of Rome! for she will sacrifice them, body and soul, to a mere display of her spiritual dominion.

Nothing, however, is more difficult than to collect the evidence of individual suffering, produced by Roman Catholic tyranny. Enough transpires in the monasteries of both sexes, to form an estimate of the wretchedness that dwells in them. But hopelessness and shame smother the sighs of their female inhabitants. Yet knowledge of human nature, a moderate degree of candour, and the consideration of the laws which have enforced, and still ensure, an internal compliance with the engagements of the religious profession; are sufficient to give an awful, though momentary view, of the mass of misery which perpetual vows have produced.

There was a time when the will of a parent could bind a

child for ever to the monastic life. That *liberal* Council of Toledo, whose laws about the Jews have been inserted in a preceding note, declares that "a monk is made either by paternal devotion, or personal profession. Whatever is bound in this manner, will hold fast. We therefore, shut up, in regard to these, all access to the world, and forbid all return to a secular life." Monachum aut paterna devotio, aut propria professio facit. Quicquid horum fuerit alligatum tenebit. Proinde his ad mundum revertendi intercludimus aditum, et omnem ad sæculum interdicimus regressum. (Concil. Tolet. IV. Can. 48.)

By the more modern discipline of the Church of Rome, this practice has been abolished; but, as it happens in all palliations of essential evils, the abolition of the barbarous power granted to parents, by removing that which shocked at first sight, only makes the remaining grievance more hopeless. There is, indeed, little difference in allowing boys and girls of sixteen to bind themselves with perpetual vows, and devoting them irrevocably to the cloister from the cradle. The Church of Rome, in her present regulations, only adds the artfulness of seduction to the unfeelingness of cruelty. I will here give her laws upon this subject, in the original language of the Council of Trent; and subjoin the brief statement of two cases, as instances of their practical operation.

Can. 9. *De Matrimonio.*—"Si quis dixerit, clericos in sacris ordinibus constitutos, vel regulares castitatem solemniter professos*, posse matrimonium contrahere contractumque validum esse, non obstante lege ecclesiastica, vel voto; posseque omnes

* The reader will here observe the difference between the secular and the regular clergy. The former do not bind themselves with vows: their celibacy is enforced only by the law which renders their marriages null and void.

contrahere matrimonium, qui non sentiunt se castitatis, etiamsi eam voverint, habere domum, anathema sit, cum Deus id recte petentibus non deneget, nec patiatur nos supra id quos possumus, tentari."

Sessio xxv. cap. 5. "Bonifacii octavi constitutionem, quæ incipit: *Periculoso*, renovans sancta synodus, universis episcopis, sub obtestatione divini judicii, et interminatione maledictionis æternæ, præcipit, ut in omnibus monasteriis sibi subjectis, ordinaria, in aliis vero, sedis apostolica auctoritate, clausuram sanctimonialium, ubi violata fuerit, diligenter restitui, et ubi inviolata est, conservari maxime procurent: inobedientes atque contradictores per censuras ecclesiasticas, aliasque pœnas, quacumque appellatione postposita, compescentes, invocato ad hoc, si opus fuerit, auxilio brachii sæcularis. Quod auxilium ut præbeatur, omnes Christianos principes hortatur sancta synodus, et sub pœna excommunicationis, ipso facto incurrenda, omnibus magistratibus sæcularibus injungit. Nemini autem sanctimonialium liceat post professionem exire a monasterio etiam ad breve tempus, quocumque prætentur."

Ib. cap. 19.—"Quicumque regularis prætendat se per vim et metum ingressum esse religionem, aut etiam dicat ante ætatem debitam professum fuisse, aut quid simile, velitque habitum dimittere, quacumque de causa, aut etiam cum habitu discedere sine licentia superiorum, non audiatur, nisi intra quinquennium tantum, a die professionis, et tunc, non aliter nisi causas quas prætenderit deduxerit coram superiore suo et ordinario. Quod si antea habitum sponte dimiserit, nullatenus ad allegandum quamcumque causam admittatur; sed ad monasterium redire cogatur, et tamquam apostata puniatur; interim nullo privilegio suæ religionis juvetur."

How strictly these laws are preserved in vigour by the

proud tyranny of the Church of Rome, and the blind subserviency of every government and people who acknowledge her, I will instance in two cases. The first I have on the authority of Don Andres Bello, Secretary to the Colombian Legation in this country: a gentleman whose great worth, talents and learning, I have had many an opportunity to know and admire, during an acquaintance of nearly fifteen years. The second is one of the many cases which I can attest from my personal knowledge.

The desertion of monks, according to the information which my friend Mr. Bello has given me on this point, has been at all times frequent in the territories of Spanish America. Their general conduct, I have been assured by every one acquainted with that country, is openly and outrageously profligate. One of the unfortunate slaves of Rome, "a man who (to use my friend's own expression) having been his own instructor, lived miserable because his mind was far above all that surrounded him," took the determination of absconding from his cowled masters, and sought for liberty in exile. His real name was Father Christoval de Quesada, a native of Cumaná and Friar of the Order of Mercy. Under the assumed designation of Don Carlos de Sucre, he travelled in different countries of Europe, and was everywhere admired for his accomplishments and agreeable manners. The love of his country betrayed him, at length, into the rash step of venturing back,—yet at a sufficient distance from his native town to imagine himself safe from detection. His abilities recommended him to the archbishop of Caracas, who made him his secretary. Some years had elapsed, when a person, having desired to speak privately to the supposed Sucre, showed him that he was in possession of his secret; but engaged to keep it—probably in consideration of some pecuniary reward. The unfortunate runaway knew too

well the nature of his circumstances, and danger; and only thought of surrendering on the most favourable conditions. He disclosed his case to the archbishop, who engaged the head of the Order of Mercy to receive the unfortunate Father Christoval, without inflicting any punishment for his flight. "It was in these circumstances (says my friend, in an interesting letter to me) that he taught me Latin, a language which he possessed in perfection. He was a man of uncommon good nature; plain and unaffected in his manners, and rather slovenly in his dress. To classical knowledge he added that of mathematics, and a considerable taste for Spanish poetry. His sermons were excellent whenever he took the pains to write them, which was seldom the case. He voluntarily took charge of the library of the convent; which he enriched with many excellent works, unknown till then in my town. He also devoted part of his time to the garden of the convent, which had hitherto been allowed to be overrun with weeds. Part of the ground he allotted to a numerous breed of ducks, fowls, and other domestic animals; but from this he was obliged to desist, for the friars whose *siesta* was disturbed by the cackling, contrived to poison their brother's favourites."—"Such (he concludes) is the history of Father Quesada, who gave to his return to the convent the appearance of a voluntary act, and donned his frock with the best good humour in the world; well aware that in his circumstances any thing else would have been most imprudent. I have heard in South America a thousand other cases of runaway friars, who have been forced back to their convents; but I am not in possession of the individual circumstances."

A strong mind, and a natural good temper, divested the preceding instance of the horrors which generally attend the

capture of the spiritual slaves who seek liberty by flight That which I am about to relate is of a much more melancholy cast. I have laid it already before the public, in *Doblado's Letters* from Spain; but though that work contains no other fiction but a few changes of names, I deem it necessary to record, with all the solemnity of history, the fate of the unfortunate nun whom I there introduced to my readers.

The eldest daughter of a family, intimately acquainted with mine, was brought up in the convent of Saint Agnes at Seville, under the care of her mother's sister, the abbess of that female community. The circumstances of the whole transaction were so public at Seville, and the subsequent judicial proceedings have given them such notoriety, that I do not feel bound to conceal names. *Maria Francisca Barreiro*, the unfortunate subject of this account, grew up, a lively and interesting girl, in the convent; while a younger sister enjoyed the advantages of an education at home. The mother formed an early design of devoting her eldest daughter to religion, in order to give to her less attractive favourite a better chance of getting a husband. The distant and harsh manner with which she constantly treated Maria Francisca, attached the unhappy girl to her aunt by the ties of the most ardent affection. The time, however, arrived when it was necessary that she should either leave her, and endure the consequences of her mother's aversion at home, or take the vows, and thus close the gates of the convent upon herself for ever. She preferred the latter course; and came out to pay the last visit to her friends. I met her, almost daily, at the house of one of her relations; where her words and manner soon convinced me that she was a victim of her mother's designing and unfeeling disposition. The father was an excellent man, though timid and undecided. He feared his wife, and was in awe of the monks; who, as usual, were ex-

tremely anxious to increase the number of their female prisoners. Though I was aware of the danger which a man incurs in Spain, who tries to dissuade a young woman from being a nun, humanity impelled me to speak seriously to the father, entreating him not to expose a beloved child to spend her life in hopeless regret for lost liberty. He was greatly moved by my reasons; but the impression I made was soon obliterated. The day for Maria Francisca's taking the veil was at length fixed; and though I had a most pressing invitation to be present at the ceremony, I determined not to see the wretched victim at the altar. On the preceding day, I was called from my stall at the Royal Chapel, to the confessional. A lady, quite covered by her black veil, was kneeling at the grate through which females speak to the confessor. As soon as I took my seat, the well-known voice of Maria Francisa made me start with surprise. Bathed in tears, and scarcely able to speak without betraying her state to the people who knelt near the confessional box, by the sobs which interrupted her words; she told me she wished only to unburden her heart to me, before she shut up herself for life. Assistance, she assured me, she would not receive; for rather than live with her mother, and endure the obloquy to which her swerving from her announced determination would expose her, she "would risk the salvation of her soul." All my remonstrances were in vain. I offered to obtain the protection of the archbishop, and thereby to extricate her from the difficulties in which she was involved. She declined my offer, and appeared as resolute as she was wretched. The next morning she took the veil; and professed at the end of the following year. Her good aunt died soon after; and the nuns, who had allured her into the convent by their caresses, when they perceived that she was not able to disguise her misery, and feared that

the existence of a reluctant nun might by her means transpire, became her daily tormentors.

After an absence of three years from Seville, I found that Maria Francisca had openly declared her aversion to a state, from which nothing but death could save her. She often changed her confessors, expecting comfort from their advice. At last she found a friend in one of the companions of my youth; a man whose benevolence surpasses even the bright genius with which nature has gifted him: though neither has been able to exempt him from the evils to which Spaniards seem to be fated in proportion to their worth. He became her confessor, and in that capacity spoke to her daily. But what could he do against the inflexible tyranny in whose grasp she languished!

About this time the approach of Napoleon's army threw the town into a general consternation, and the convents were opened to such of the nuns as wished to fly. Maria Francisca, whose parents were absent, put herself under the protection of a young prebendary of the Cathedral, and by his means reached Cadiz, where I saw her, on my way to England. I shall never forget the anguish with which, after a long conversation wherein she disclosed to me the whole extent of her wretchedness, she exclaimed *There is no hope for me!* and fell into convulsions.

The liberty of Spain from the French invaders was the signal for the fresh confinement of this helpless young woman to her former prison. Here she attempted to put an end to her sufferings by throwing herself into a deep well; but was taken out alive. Her mother was now dead, and her friends instituted a suit of *nullity of profession*, before the ecclesiastical court. But the laws of the Council of Trent were positive; and she was cast in the trial. Her despair, however, exhausted

the little strength which her protracted sufferings had left her, and the unhappy Maria Francisca died soon after, having scarcely reached her twenty-fifth year.

CORRUPTION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CLERGY AT THE PERIOD OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

The corrupt morals which prevailed among the Roman Catholic bishops and higher clergy, are attested by the legates who presided at the first sessions of the Council of Trent.

" Hoc enim summatim dicimus de omni genere armorum si, qui illa contra nos tractarunt, a suis ecclesiis pastores fugarunt, ordines confuderunt, laicos in episcoporum locum suffecerunt, ecclesiæ bona diripuerunt, cursum verbi Dei impediverunt: hic, inquam, dicimus, nihil horum esse, quod in libro abusuum pastorum, *maxima illorum pars*, qui hoc nomen sibi vendicant, per se factum esse, si legere libuerint, non scriptum apertis verbis inveniant. *Nostram enim ambitionem, nostram avaritiam, nostras cupiditates*, his omnibus malis populum Dei prius affecisse statim inveniet atque harum vi ab ecclesiis pastores fugari, easque pabulo verbi privari, bona ecclesiarum, quæ sunt bona pauperum ab illis tolli, indignis sacerdotia conferri, et illis qui nihil a laicis præterquam in vestis genere, ac ne in hoc quidem differunt, dari. *Quid enim horum est, quod negare possimus per hos annos a nobis factum esse.*"—Concione ad Concilium, pp. 736, 737. Collect Labbei et Gossartii.

K.—Page 151.

REAL INFLUENCE OF ROME AND THE MONKS UPON LEARNING.

Opinion is no less subject than taste to the periodical turns and changes of fashion. The love of the romantic has lately raised every thing belonging to the middle ages in the estimation of the reading public, and monks and monasteries share the favour into which the period of their full prosperity has grown. We constantly hear of the services which the monks and their church have rendered to religion and learning; and men seem willing either to disbelieve or forget the deep wounds which their gross ignorance, and still grosser immorality, gave to both.

These alternate turns of the public attention to the favourable and unfavourable side of historical subjects deprive us of the benefits of experience, as we might derive them from the records of former times. To judge of the utility of old institutions, we should be careful not to mistake the accidental effects which they may have produced, for the predominant and decided tendency of their moral operation. There is no human establishment unmixed with evil: of this we are well aware; but few men are fully impressed with the fact, that no pure and unmixed evil can long exist, except by open violence. When, therefore, we see any law, custom, or establishment supported and cherished for a length of time, we may be sure that its existence is connected with some real, though partial, advantages. The philosopher, in such cases, should not confine his observation to the partial operation on either side, good or evil; but examine in the first place, whether the original rise of the institution took place at the ex-

pense of social prosperity; and next, whether, upon the whole, it was calculated eventually to improve or degrade society.

The epigram made upon the usurer who, having impoverished a district, founded an extensive almshouse *to keep the poor he had made*, is, I believe, perfectly applicable to the monks and their peculiar church, in regard to the mental interests of mankind. They first barbarized the polished subjects of imperial Rome, and then fed them with the intellectual garbage of their schools.

A number of circumstances made the Christians of the primitive ages extremely averse to profane literature. The first cause of this was their general want of education; for it pleased God to change the moral face of the world by the instrumentality of the poor and ignorant, that the supernatural work of his grace in the conversion of mankind might be evident. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, that no flesh should glory in his presence*." The abuse of the name of science was, in the second place, a source of strong dislike to knowledge among the early Christians. Abominable practices of sortilege and imposture were common among those men, who, under the name of mathematicians, Chaldeans, and astrologers, were known all over the empire in the first century of the Christian æra. The prevalence of these abuses may be conceived by the multitude of books on magic which were burnt at Ephesus, in consequence of the preaching of Paul†.

But nothing appears to have so much prepared the darkness

* 1 Cor. i. 27, 29.

† "Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." Acts xix. 19.

of the middle ages, as the prevalence of mookery in the Christian church. The extraordinary reverence paid to the grossly ignorant multitudes who inhabited the Egyptian deserts* must naturally have tended to the discredit of study and acquirements. When the monastic institution was introduced into the West, and became widely spread under the patronage of the Popes, a spirit of opposition to every thing that can refine and enlighten the mind became visible. As both literature and the arts had flourished among the heathen, zeal and piety conspired to render them odious to the generality of Christians. If, as there is reason to suspect it, the Christians joined the barbarians in the destruction of the works of art, the charge falls especially upon the monks, who appear to have courted and gained the favour of the invaders†.

But nothing is more certain than that the neglect of ancient literature, and the substitution of scholastic learning, was chiefly the work of him who, as it were in mockery of titles bestowed by men, is called the *Great* among the Popes who bore the name of Gregory. That his zeal in the propagation of Christianity was extraordinary and sincere, it would be injustice to doubt; but it is equally indubitable, that, to a mind grossly superstitious and ignorant, he joined a shocking in-

* There were 76,000 monks in Egypt at the end of the 4th century.

† Dr. Clarke, in his work on *Greek Marbles*, seems to understand two passages from Eunapius in this sense. I confess that, considering the circumstances of the case, the fact is extremely probable to me; but the words of Eunapius may be understood, not of direct, but indirect co-operation with the irruption of the barbarians into Greece. Eunapius says, "that the *impiety* of those who wore black garments (the monks) had opened the passage of the Thermopylæ to Alaric and his barbarians." This may be understood in the same sense as it is said that the weakness of the Roman government invited the invasion of the northern tribes. The Latin translation is too definite for the original, and does not render it strictly. Instead of the abstract word ασεβεια, it has *impia gens*. See *Eunapius De Vit. Philos. in Maximo.*

difference to moral character in those who felt disposed to favour the Roman see, and her then maturing plans of supremacy. His flattery of the monster Phocas is a disgrace both to Gregory and to his see, and shows the character of papal ambition in its true colours*.

Gregory enjoyed a most extraordinary moral influence in his time, which he wholly directed to the object of effacing the few remaining traces of ancient literature, and introducing monkish learning in its worst shape. "A report has reached our ears," he writes to a professor of grammar, "which I cannot mention without shame, that your fraternity expounds grammar to some persons; this is so painful to us, and it so vehemently raises our scorn, that it has changed all I have previously said into wailing and sorrow—the same mouth, indeed, cannot hold the praises of Jupiter and of Christ." Gregory made a public boast of his ignorance, and inveighed with such vehemence against all polite literature, that the report of his having burnt the Palatine library, collected at Rome by the emperors, though doubted by modern critics, receives a strong confirmation from his character. "I scorn," he says, "that art of speaking which is conveyed by external teaching. The very tenor of this epistle shows that I do not avoid the clashing of metacism, nor the obscurity of barbarism: I despise all trouble about prepositions and cases, because I hold it most unworthy to put the heavenly oracles under the restraint of a grammarian†."

With such a pattern of elegance and learning before them,

* See the article under Gregory's name in Bayle's Dictionary. See also Gibbon.

† Non metacismi collisionem effugio, non barbarismi confusionem devito: situs, motusque præpositionum casusque servare contemno, quia indignum vehementer existimo, ut verba cœlestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati.

the Christian world had no fair chance at the beginning of the seventh century to escape the intellectual darkness which was settling on Europe. Gregory's books on morals were generally substituted in the room of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero. Pope Theodore 1st. gave out that he had recovered the lost copy of that work by a revelation of St. Peter and St. Paul, and thus enhanced its value to those who, from distant countries, sent for it to Rome, to make it the source and standard of their knowledge*. Abstracts and digests of it were industriously compiled for the use of students; and Gregory became the founder, master, and leader of the barbarous schools of the middle ages.

The limits of a note oblige me to refer my readers to the interesting history of the rise of school philosophy, given by Brucker, Period. II. Pars II. cap. ii. de Philos. Christ. Occident. tom. iii.

On the moral character of the monks, Fleury, a Roman Catholic, gives considerable information in his eighth discourse, prefixed to Vol. XX. of his Histoire Ecclesiastique.

L.—Page 167.

PROCLAMATION OF THE JUBILEE FOR THE PRESENT YEAR OF 1825.

The Bull by which the present Pope has proclaimed the jubilee is so curious a document, that posterity will hardly believe it was really published in the last year of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. I wish to increase its

* Mariana claims the honour of the revelation for Tajon, bishop of Saragossa. *Hist. de España*, L. vi. c. viii.

circulation as much as it may be in my power; for I am persuaded no arguments are so powerful against Rome as the authentic documents in which she breathes out her genuine spirit. I beg the attention of the reader to the catalogue of curious relics, by which the Pope tries to draw pilgrims to his capital; and to that part of the Bull where he addresses all Protestants, inviting them "to have one consentient mind with this (the Roman) Church, *the mother and mistress of all others, out of which there is no salvation.*"

The translation which I use is taken from the Roman Catholic *Laity's Directory* for 1825.

LEO BISHOP,

SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD,

To all the faithful of Christ who shall see these presents, health and apostolical benediction.

In the merciful dispensations of the Lord, it is at length granted to our humility, to announce to you with joy, that the period is at hand, when what we regretted was omitted at the commencement of the present century, in consequence of the direful calamities of the times, is to be happily observed according to the established custom of our forefathers; for that most propitious year, intitled to the utmost religious veneration, is approaching, when christians from every region of the earth will resort to this our holy city and the chair of blessed Peter, and when the most abundant treasures of reconciliation and grace will be offered as means of salvation to all the faithful disposed to perform the exercises of piety which are prescribed. During this year, which we truly call the acceptable time and the time of salvation, we congratulate you that a favourable occasion is presented, when, after the miserable accumulation

of disasters under which we have groaned, we may strive to renew all things in Christ, by the salutary atonement of all christian people. We have therefore resolved, in virtue the authority given to us by Heaven, fully to unlock that sacred treasure, composed of the merits, sufferings, and virtues of Christ our Lord, and of his Virgin Mother, and of all the saints, which the Author of human salvation has intrusted to our dispensation.

In this it becomes us to magnify the abundant riches of the divine clemency, by which Christ, preventing us with the blessings of sweetness, so willed the infinite power of his merits to be diffused through the parts of his mystical body, that they by reciprocal co-operation, and by the most wholesome communication of advantages flowing from faith, which worketh by charity, might mutually assist each other: and by the immense price of the blood of the Lord, and for his sake and virtue, as also by the merits and suffrages of the saints, might gain the remission of the temporal punishment, which the fathers of the Council of Trent have taught is not always entirely remitted, as is the case in baptism, by the sacrament of penance.

Let the earth, therefore, hear the words of our mouth, and let the whole world joyfully hearken to the voice of the priestly trumpet sounding forth to God's people the sacred Jubilee. We proclaim that the year of atonement and pardon, of redemption and grace, of remission and indulgence, is arrived; in which we know that those benefits which the old law, the messenger of things to come, brought every fiftieth year to the Jewish people, are renewed in a much more sacred manner by the accumulation of spiritual blessing through Him by whom came peace and truth. For if the lands that had been sold, and property that had passed into other hands, were reclaimed in that salutary year, so we

recover *now*, by the infinite liberality of God, the virtues, and merits, and gifts, of which we are despoiled by sin. If then the chains of human bondage ceased to exist,—so at present, by shaking off the most galling yoke of diabolical subjection, we are called to the liberty of God's children, to that liberty which Christ has granted us. If, in fine, by the precept of the law, pecuniary debts were then pardoned to debtors, and they became discharged from every bond,—we are also exonerated from a much heavier debt of sins, and are released by the divine mercy from the punishments incurred by them.

Eagerly wishing that so many and such great advantages may accrue to your souls, and confidently invoking God, the giver of all good gifts, through the bowels of his mercy, in conformity to the exigency of the prescribed period, and the pious institutes of the Roman pontiffs, our predecessors, and walking in their footsteps,—we, with the assent of our venerable brethren, the cardinals of the holy Roman church, do, by the authority of Almighty God, and of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own, for the glory of God himself, the exaltation of the Catholic church, and the sanctification of all Christian people, ordain and publish the universal and most solemn Jubilee to commence in this holy city from the first vespers of the Nativity of our most holy Saviour Jesus Christ, next ensuing, and to continue during the whole year 1825; during which year of the jubilee we mercifully give and grant in the Lord a plenary indulgence, remission, and pardon of all their sins, to all the faithful of Christ of both sexes, truly penitent and confessing their sins, and receiving the holy communion, who shall devoutly visit the churches of blessed Peter and Paul, as also of St. John Lateran and St. Mary Major, of this city, for thirty successive or uninterrupted (whether natural or ecclesiastical) days, to be counted, to wit, from the

first vespers of one day until the evening twilight of the day following, provided they be Romans or inhabitants of this city; but if they be pilgrims or otherwise strangers, if they shall do the same for fifteen days, and shall pour forth their pious prayers to God for the exaltation of the holy church, the extirpation of heresies, concord of Catholic princes, and the safety and tranquillity of christian people.

And because it may happen that some persons who shall set out on their journey, or shall arrive in this city, may be detained in their way, or even in the city itself, by illness or other lawful excuse, or be prevented by death from completing the prescribed number of days, or perhaps even beginning them, and may be unable to comply with the premises, and visit the said churches, we will, in our desire of graciously favouring their pious and ready disposition as far as we can in the Lord, that the same, being truly penitent and confessing their sins, and receiving the holy communion, become partakers of the aforesaid indulgence and remission as fully as if they had actually visited the said churches on the days by us appointed; so that, though hindered by the necessities aforesaid, they may, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, obtain the effect of their desires.

These things we announce to you, beloved children, with a fatherly affection, that you, who labour and are burthened, may hasten thither, where you know for certain that refreshment awaits you. Neither is it allowable to remain indifferent and heartless about acquiring these salutary riches from the eternal treasures of divine grace which the most holy and indulgent mother, the church, throws open to you, whilst men are so eagerly intent on amassing earthly possessions, which the moth consumes or the rust eats away. And when, from the earliest times, there has been great and constant concourse of people, of every station, flocking from all parts of the globe, in

defiance of the length and the dangers of the journey, to visit this principal residence of the fine arts, which they admire like a brilliant prodigy, for the magnificence of its buildings, and the majesty of the place, and the beauty of its monuments, —it would indeed be base, and most foreign to the desire of never-ending happiness, to pretend the difficulty or dangers of the journey, and similar excuses, to decline the pilgrimage to Rome. There is, beloved brethren, there is in reserve what will most amply remunerate you for every inconvenience and hardship: yes, these sufferings, if any such occur, are not fit to be compared to the weight of glory to come, which, with God's assistance, will be secured to you by the means prepared for the sanctification of your souls. For you will here reap the most abundant fruits of penance, by which you may offer to God the sacrifice of your bodies, chastised by continued acts of self-denial; may religiously perform the works of piety prescribed by the conditions of the indulgence; and may add a new force to your fixed and persevering resolution to satisfy for your past crimes by penitential austerities, and to avoid all sin for the time to come.

Therefore ascend with loins girt up to this holy Jerusalem, this priestly and royal city, which, by the sacred chair of the blessed Peter, become the capital of the world, is seen to maintain more extensive dominion by the divine influence of religion than by earthly authority. "For this is the city," said St. Charles, exhorting his people to visit Rome in the holy year, "this is the city whose soil, walls, altars, churches, tombs of the martyrs, and every visible object, suggest something religious to the mind, as they experience and feel, who approach these sacred abodes with proper dispositions." Consider how much it conduces to excite faith and charity, to proceed round those ancient places, by which the majesty of reli-

gion is wonderfully recommended; then to place before one's eyes so many thousand martyrs, who have consecrated this very soil with their blood;—to enter their churches, to witness their honours, and venerate their shrines. Now, "if heaven is not so resplendent, when the sun darts forth its rays, as is the city of the Romans, possessing those two luminaries, Peter and Paul, diffusing their light through the universe," as St. John Chrysostome said, who will dare, without the affection of the tenderest devotion, to approach their CONFESSIONS, to prostrate before their tombs, and kiss their chains, more precious than gold and gems? Who, in fine, can refrain from tears, when, perceiving the cradle of Christ, he shall recollect the infant Jesus crying in the manger; or, saluting the most sacred instruments of our Lord's passion, shall meditate on the Redeemer of the world hanging on the cross?

Since these venerable monuments of religion, by the singular bounty of divine Providence, are collected in this city alone, they are truly the sweetest pledges of love,—that the Lord loveth the gates of Sion above all the tents of Jacob; and they affectionately invite you all, dearest children, without delay, to ascend the mountain, where it has pleased the Lord to dwell.

But here our solicitude demands that we especially address all ranks in this holy city; reminding them that the eyes of the faithful, arriving from every part of the world, are fixed upon them; that, therefore, nothing but what is grave, moderate, and becoming the Christian, ought to appear in them; so that all may seek from their conduct an example of modesty, innocence, and of every kind of virtue. Hence, from this chosen people, among whom the Prince of pastors has pleased that the chair of the most blessed Peter should be fixed, let the rest of mankind learn how to reverence the Catholic church

and ecclesiastical authority, to obey its precepts, and always to render great honour to ecclesiastical things and persons.

Let the respect that is due to churches be conspicuous in them, so that nothing may be observed by strangers of a nature to bring the sacred rights of religion or holy places into contempt or disrepute; nothing that can offend decency, purity, or modesty; nothing but what will excite admiration and edification. Let all be correct and regular in their conduct; let them show by their external behaviour that they attend the duties of religion, not merely by their corporeal presence, but in the true spirit of piety and devotion.

We also press on their attention, not to appear engaged, on the days appointed for sacred offices and the honour of God and his saints, in the celebration of feasting, and amusements, and unseasonable mirth, and wanton licentiousness. In fine, "whatever things are true, whatever are modest, whatever are just, whatever are holy, whatever are lovely, whatever are of good fame,"—let these shine forth in the Roman people, so that we may congratulate them that the glory of faith and piety, for which they were recommended as an example by the apostle Paul, and which have been transmitted to them by their ancestors as their best inheritance, has received no tarnish, but has even been illustrated in their zeal and edifying conduct.

We are indeed refreshed with this consoling hope, that each one will be zealous for the better gifts, that the sheep of the Lord's flock will run to the embraces of the Shepherd, and that all will be as an army in battle array, having charity for their banner. Therefore, "Jerusalem, lift up thine eyes round about, and see: thy sons from far shall come to thee, and thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged." But would to God "that the children of them that afflicted thee would come

bowing down to thee, and all that slander thee would worship the steps of thy feet." To you, to you we address ourselves with the entire affection of our apostolic heart, whom we bewail as separated from the true church of Christ and the road of salvation. In this common exultation, this alone is wanted: grant it to your most loving parent, that at length, called by the inspiration of the Spirit from above into his admirable light, and bursting asunder every snare of division, you may have one consentient mind with this church, the mother and mistress of all others, out of which there is no salvation. Enlarging our heart, we will joyfully receive you into our fatherly bosom, and will bless the God of all consolation, who, in this greatest triumph of Catholic faith, shall enrich us with these riches of his mercy.

But you, venerable brethren, patriarchs, primates, archbishops, bishops, co-operate with these our cares and desires; call a solemn assembly, gather the people, that your children may be prompted to receive those gifts which the Father of mercies has entrusted for distribution amongst the children of his love, through the ministry of our humility; remind them, that short are the days of this our pilgrimage; and since we know not at what hour the Father of the household may come, that we must therefore be on the watch, and bear in our hands burning lamps full of the oil of charity, so that we may readily and cheerfully meet the Lord's arrival. To you it belongs to explain with perspicuity the power of indulgences; what is their efficacy, not only in the remission of the canonical penance, but also of the temporal punishment due to the divine justice for past sin; and what succour is afforded out of this heavenly treasure, from the merits of Christ and his saints, to such as have departed real penitents in God's love, yet before they had duly satisfied by fruits worthy of penance for sin of

commission and omission, and are now purifying in the fire of purgatory, that an entrance may be opened for them into their eternal country, where nothing defiled is admitted. Courage and attention, venerable brethren! for some there are, following that wisdom which is not from God, and covering themselves with the clothing of sheep,—under the usual pretence of a more refined piety, are now sowing amongst the people erroneous comments on this subject. Do you teach the flock their several duties; in what deeds of piety and charity they ought to employ themselves; with what diligence, with what sense of sorrow, they ought to examine themselves and their past life; that they should remove and correct what is pernicious in their conduct, so that they may obtain the most abundant and proper fruit of this most sacred indulgence.

But it becomes you, venerable brethren, principally to attend to this, that the members of your respective flocks, who undertake the pilgrimage, may perform it with a religious spirit; that they should avoid every thing on the journey which can disturb their pious purpose, or withdraw them from their holy resolutions; and that they should diligently follow up whatever is conducive to animate and inflame devotion. If, taking into consideration your persons and places, you be at liberty to visit this capital of religion, much splendour will be reflected by your presence on this solemnity; you will accumulate the most abundant riches of the divine mercy, and on your return will delightfully share the same, as most valuable treasures, amongst your people.

Nor can we doubt but that all our dearest children in Christ, the Catholic princes, will assist us on this great occasion with their powerful concurrence; that these our views, so beneficial to souls, may have the desired effect. For this purpose, we entreat and exhort them, by their commendable zeal for

religion, to second the ardour of our venerable episcopal brethren, to co-operate diligently with their exertions, and to provide safe conduct and protection, and houses of hospitable reception, along the roads throughout their several dominions, that they may not be exposed to any injury in the performance of this most pious work. They must be fully aware what a general conspiracy was formed to root up the most sacred rights of the altar and the throne, and what wonders the Lord has wrought, who, stretching forth his hand, has humbled the arrogance of the strong. Let them reflect, that constant and suitable thanks ought to be rendered to the Lord of lords, to whom we are indebted for the victory; that the succour of the divine mercy is to be obtained by humble and frequent prayer; and that, as the wickedness of the impious is still creeping like a cancer, He may accomplish, in his clemency towards us, that work which he himself has begun. This, truly, we had chiefly in view, when we deliberated on the celebration of the Jubilee; well persuaded of the importance of such a sacrifice of praise to the Lord, in this common consent of all Christian people, for obtaining those heavenly gifts, all the treasures of which we now throw open. Let, therefore, the Catholic princes labour for this purpose; and as they are endowed with great and generous minds, let them protect this most sacred work with earnest zeal and perpetual care. Assuredly they will learn, by experience, that by this means particularly they will secure to themselves the mercies of God; and that they certainly add to the support of their own government by whatever they do for the protection of religion and the encouragement of piety; so that having destroyed every seed of vice, a delightful crop of virtues may succeed.

But in order that all may prosper to our wishes, we entreat your prayers with God, dear children, who are of the fold of

Christ; for we confide in your common vows and supplications, which you put forth to the divine mercy, for the welfare of the Catholic religion, and for the return of those that err to the truth, and for the happiness of princes; and that you will hereby powerfully assist our infirmity in supporting our most weighty functions.

And that these presents may more easily come to the knowledge of all the faithful in every place, we will, that precisely the same credit be paid even to printed copies, signed nevertheless by the hand of some public notary, and certified by the seal of a person invested with ecclesiastical dignity, as would be paid to these presents, if they should be produced or shown.

Be it, therefore, utterly unlawful for any man to infringe, or by any rash attempt to gainsay, this page of our ordinance, promulgation, grant, exhortation, demand, and will. But if any one shall presume to attempt it, let him know, that he shall incur the indignation of Almighty God, and of his blessed apostles Peter and Paul.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, in the year of our Lord's Incarnation 1824, on the 24th May, in the first year of our Pontificate.

A. G. Cardinal, Pro-Datary.
J. Cardinal Albani.

APPENDIX.

Extracts from the DEVOTION AND OFFICE OF THE SACRED HEART OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST; *with its Nature, Origin, Progress,* &c. &c. including the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of the B. V. Mary, &c. &c. &c., and the Recommendatory Pastoral Letter of the Bp. of Boulogne to the Faithful in his Diocese. Twelfth Edition: with an Appendix, on the Devotion to the S. H. of Jesus;—Prayers for the Exercise of that Devotion; and the Indult of his Holiness P.ᵉ Pius VII. in favour of it: for the Use of the Midland District. London, by Keating and Brown, 1821*.

"What is the corporeal and sensible object of this devotion? It is the material heart of the Son of God, who was made man out of his pure love for us; it is the most noble part of his adorable body; it is the principal organ of all the affections, and consequently of all the virtues of his blessed humanity; it is the seat and centre wherein *corporeally dwells all the pleni-*

* As it is impossible to give an adequate idea of the contents of this book without making extracts that would exceed all reasonable limits, I strongly recommend the perusal of it to those who wish to form a correct opinion of the true character of Roman Catholic devotion.

tude of his divinity, and which becoming by virtue of the hypostatical union the heart of the King of kings, of the Holy of holies, of the God of majesty, is raised to an infinite dignity, which makes it worthy of our profound homage and adoration."—Pages 10, 11.

"In a small town called Paroy le Monial, in the province of Burgundy, and diocese of Autun, there is a convent of the Visitation of the blessed Virgin Mary. Here a holy nun named Mary Margaret was consecrated to Jesus Christ at the age of twenty, and lived in retirement unknown. She died there in the odour of sanctity, aged forty, on the 17th of October, 1690. Her virtues are attested by her superiors, and we learn by a writing she gave in obedience to her director, how eminently she was favoured by Almighty God.

"This holy virgin was chosen by Jesus Christ to give a beginning to the devotion to his sacred heart. To dispose her to accomplish his design, he infused into her a perfect knowledge of the excellence, the perfections, and the sufferings of this heart. This gave her an ardent desire to see it known, honoured, and glorified by all creatures. When she was thus prepared, Jesus Christ one day appeared to her, and declared his intention of establishing a solemnity in honour of his sacred heart, adding that he chose her to be the instrument of carrying it into execution. Happy to find that the devotion was to be established, she trembled at the thought of being employed in it. Her youth, her natural diffidence, and her retirement from creatures, made her conclude that the execution of the design must in her hands be impossible. Under this impression she studiously concealed the revelation. But God still urging her to obey, she at length conceived that she could no

longer resist without guilt. Father Claude la Colombiere, of the Society of Jesus, coming providentially to Paroy, she determined to open herself fully to him. This holy man, whose eminent sanctity and excellent writings still preserve his memory fresh in the minds of the faithful, full of the spirit of God, not content with hearing from her mouth all that had passed as above mentioned, obliged her moreover to deliver in writing a circumstantial account of the revelation she had received and so long concealed, concerning this devotion to the sacred heart. We have in the foregoing chapter quoted and explained it.

"He was too well acquainted with the eminent sanctity of his penitent to doubt her sincerity, and he considered the concluding injunction as an order of Jesus Christ, obliging him to use all his endeavours to promote the design. But his absence from France, his infirmities, and the shortness of his remaining existence, prevented his making any considerable progress at the time. But we shall soon see that he was an instrument in the hands of Providence even after his death."
—Page 58—61.

"In 1720, when Provence was afflicted with the plague, and saw its most flourishing cities fall a prey to the scourge; when a general consternation pervaded the whole kingdom, God inspiring the suffering victims with a hope of safety from a devout address to his sacred heart, they had recourse to it to appease the vengeance of offended Heaven. One town followed another in adopting the means of delivery. Bishops and magistrates consecrated their respective people to the sacred heart, and engaged themselves by oath to celebrate the feast

annually to the end of time. It may be said with truth, that God employed this visitation as a means to promote the glory of his sacred heart, which was the fruit of it. Happy they who wait not for the scourge, but apply to this amiable heart in order to prevent the punishment which their sins have deserved!"—Pages 64, 65.

"OBJECTION.—If the church approves a feast in honour of the divine heart of Jesus Christ, why not approve of other feasts to honour every part of his sacred body? Why a particular feast in honour of his divine heart? Moreover, the feasts are already so numerous in the church, that it seems improper to multiply them; new offices interrupt those which the church has formerly instituted.

"As this objection has made great impression on many who have taken no pains to examine it, I have thought it necessary to mention it in a separate article, and to show the weakness of it.

"The numerous confraternities who celebrate the feast of the Sacred Heart with great solemnity, the number of bishops who have approved them, the number of briefs of indulgences granted to them by the holy see, are a great proof that the above objection has nothing solid. It is of little purpose to dispute whether the feast of the sacred heart deserves to be approved. In a point of this nature, a great part of the church, authorised by so many bishops and the holy see, cannot mistake; for which reason, the objection which opposes the institution of this feast can make no impression on a faithful and devout soul."—Pages 115, 116.

LETTERS PATENT OF AGGREGATION.

We Brother FRANCIS of S. REGINALD, Prior of the venerable Arch-confraternity of the sacred heart of JESUS at ROME,

To our beloved in Christ, the associates in the sacred heart of Jesus, the faithful of either sex, who are any ways British subjects, or descended from them, wheresoever they dwell; greeting in our Lord.

Whereas his holiness of pious memory, Clement the XII. has by sundry decrees, viz. by one of the 7th of March, 1732, another of the 28th of February, ditto, and a third of the 12th of June, 1736, granted many favours and privileges to our arch-confraternity of the sacred heart; and among the rest has empowered it to unite and associate to itself any particular confraternity of the sacred heart, extant any where out of Rome, and to impart to it all and every indulgence, grant, or release of the canonical penance due to sins, that has at any time been heretofore granted to this our arch-confraternity by his said holiness.

And whereas a confraternity of the sacred heart, erected in the church or domestic chapel of the English fathers of the society of Jesus at Bruges, has applied to us, through its solicitor in Rome, Signor Joseph Monionelli, in order to obtain leave to be thus associated to ours, and to share in all its privileges and grants: we have thought fit, considering the many good works of piety, penance and charity performed in that confraternity at Bruges, (which as to all essentials is modelled upon the same plan as ours) to unite and associate to it our arch-confraternity, pursuant to the power given us for this purpose by the holy see; and we grant to it and its members

all the indulgences and particular favours mentioned in the Popes' briefs, still keeping within the terms of the decree of Clement VIII. which directs such associations and communications of spiritual treasures.

Moreover, besides the indulgence and special favours set down in the above-mentioned papal grant, we impart to the said confraternity a share in all the masses, prayers, mortifications, pilgrimages, and other good works performed throughout the whole world by the several religious orders of Benedictins, Bernardins, Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, Theatins, and Fathers of the Society of Jesus, pursuant to the power we have received thereunto from the superiors of the said orders; as may be seen in the authentic deeds belonging to our arch-confraternity, and lodged in our archives.

For the proof whereof we have caused the present deed, signed by our own hand, to be underwritten and published by the secretary of our arch-confraternity, and to be sealed with the seal thereof.

Given at Rome, in the usual place of our congregation, the 30th of January 1767, in the 9th year of his present holiness Clement the XIIIth's pontificate, formerly our fellow associate, and now our most liberal father and protector.

Br. Francis of St. Reginald, Prior.

Br. Philip of St. Joseph of Callassantio, Secretary.

Registered, book the first, page 63, No. 38.

THE APPROBATION OF THE BISHOP OF BRUGES.

We permit the publishing of these letters of aggregation, still with due regard to be paid to the decree of Clement the VIII. *Quæcumque à sede Apostolica*, and we approve of the choice made by the associates, of the Friday after the Octave of *Corpus Christi*, for the principal feast of the association, in

order to gain the plenary indulgence, and of the first Sunday in Advent, the second Sunday after the Epiphany, the third after Easter, and the first Sunday of October, to gain the indulgence of seven years, and of so many quarantines, or forty days.

Given at Bruges, in our episcopal Palace, the 20th of March 1767.

By the order of his lordship the bishop of Bruges.

C. Beerenbrock, Secretary.

A petition that British Subjects might partake of the advantages of this institution, though remote from and unable to attend in the chapels appointed for the Association.

Holy Father,

The president, and the members of the confraternity of the most holy heart of Jesus, instituted for the subjects of Great Britain, of both sexes, in the chapel of the English seminary at Bruges, in Flanders, and associated to the arch-confraternity of the same title erected in the church of St. Theodore, at Rome, prostrate themselves at your Holiness's feet, and dutifully represent the signal advantages arising from the said confraternity in the increase of spiritual fervour among the faithful, and desirous to transmit these religious fruits to the latest posterity, humbly supplicate your Holiness to grant, that the members of the said confraternity of both sexes, who are not at liberty to visit the aforesaid chapel on the days appointed for obtaining the indulgences granted to the confraternity, may obtain all and every one of them, as if they had personally attended, provided they perform all the other good works prescribed for obtaining the said indulgences.

THE GRANT.

At the audience of his Holiness, Feb. 23d, 1768.

Our Holy Father Pope Clement XIII. is graciously pleased to grant the prayer of the petition, and enacts, that such members of the confraternity as have it not in their power to visit the aforesaid chapel on the days appointed for obtaining the indulgences granted to the same, may have the benefit of all and every one of them, provided they perform all the other religious duties prescribed on that occasion; and his Holiness was pleased to order, that this his concession should be at all times considered as valid without the expedition of a brief.

Dated, Rome, from the office of the Secretary of the holy Congregation of Indulgences.

CARDINAL CALANI,
Prefect.

BORGIA, *Secretary of the sacred Congregation of Indulgences.*

—Page 188—195.

THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF MARY.

SECTION I.

As the adorable heart of Jesus was formed in the chaste womb of the blessed Virgin, and of her blood and substance, so we cannot in a more proper and agreeable manner show our devotion to the sacred heart of the Son, than by dedicating some part of the said devotion to the ever pure heart of the Mother. For you have two hearts here united in the most strict alliance and tender conformity of sentiments, so that it

is not in nature to please the one without making yourself agreeable to the other, and acceptable to both. Go then, devout client, go to the heart of Jesus, but let your way be through the heart of Mary. The sword of grief which pierced her soul, opens you a passage: enter by the wound love has made; advance to the heart of Jesus, and rest there even to death itself. Presume not to separate and divide two objects so intimately one, or united together, but ask redress in all your exigencies from the heart of Jesus, and ask this redress through the heart of Mary.

This form and method of worship is the doctrine and the very spirit of God's church: it is what she teaches us in the unanimous voice and practice of the faithful, who will by no means that Jesus and Mary should be separated from each other in our prayers, praises, and affections. This consideration has engaged the sovereign pontiffs and head pastors of the church to give the self-same sanction to the pious practices instituted in honour of the sacred heart of Mary, as they give to those of the adorable heart of Jesus, both within their proper limits. They both have equally their feasts and solemnities, both their associations, and those too equally enriched with the treasures of the church, under the liberal dispensation of its governors. Many are the pious and virtuous souls who have drawn most signal fruit and advantages from these devotions.—Page 198—200.

A NOVENA, OR NINE DAYS' DEVOTION TO THE EVER-BLESSED VIRGIN.

Having, out of devotion, lighted up a wax candle, either in your private oratory or in the church, recite each day the

following prayer. The intent is for the obtaining some particular favour.

"Incomparable Virgin! chosen by the ever adorable Trinity, from all eternity, to be the most pure mother of Jesus, allow thy servant to remind thee of that ineffable joy thou receivedst in the instant of the most sacred incarnation of our divine Lord, and during the nine months thou carriedst him in thy most chaste bowels. O! that I could but renew, or if possible increase this thy joy by the fervor of my prayers; at least, most tender Mother of the afflicted! grant me, under the present pressure, those maternal consolations and that peculiar protection, thou hast promised to such as shall devoutly commemorate this ineffable joy. Relying on thy sacred word, and trusting in thy promises, I humbly entreat thee to obtain from Jesus Christ, thy dearly beloved Son, my request."

Having specified it, say,

"May this light I burn before thy image, stand as a memorial of the lively confidence I repose in thy bounty. May it consume in honour of that inflamed and supernatural love and joy with which thy sacred heart was replenished during the abode of thy blessed Son in thy womb: in veneration of which I offer to thee the sentiments of my heart, and the following salutations."

Say nine Hail Marys, and then the following Prayers.

"Mother of my God most merciful! to thee I offer these *Hail Marys:* they are so many brilliant jewels in the diadem of thy accidental glory, which will remain increasing to the end of the world. I beseech thee, Comforter of the afflicted!

by the joy thou receivedst in the nine months of thy pregnancy, to comfort my afflicted heart, and to obtain for me, from thy Son, a favourable answer to the petition I make to thy compassionate mercy and benevolence. To this effect I offer to thee all the good works that have ever been performed in the confraternities of thy sacred heart, and other associations in thy honour. I most humbly entreat thee, on this consideration, and for the love of the sacred heart of Jesus, with which thy own was ever so inflamed, to hear my humble suit and grant my request. *Amen.*"—Page 208—211.

An Example.

"A nobleman, who for sixty years of his life past had never had access to the sacraments, and who had given loose to the passions of his body and mind, and abandoned himself to the slavery of his spiritual enemy, fell sick, and was in the utmost danger of death. Hopes of salvation he had none, and so desperate was his case, that he would not give ear to the salutary advice of his director, or admit into his mind the thoughts of reconciling himself to his Creator, by means of the sacrament of penance. Nevertheless, in the midst of the excesses of so profligate a life, he had never entirely lost sight of some small devotion and regard to the ever blessed Mother of God. Jesus Christ, who manifests the riches of his mercy particularly to such as cast a favourable eye towards her, raised in him so great a compunction for his sins, that, entering into himself, and in the utmost contrition of his heart, he three several times in the same day made a general confession of his whole

life, received the holy eucharist, and the sixth day after died in all peace and quiet of mind, and with the sentiments of joy which flow from a well-grounded confidence in the mercies and bounty of our suffering Redeemer and his sacred passion. In effect, our blessed Saviour revealed, soon after his death, to the holy St. Bridget, that the said penitent died in a state of grace, was a blessed soul, and owed his happiness in great measure to the tender affectionate compassion which he had ever found and nourished in his heart, so often as he heard others speak of the sacred dolours of our blessed Lady, or happened to entertain the memory of them in his mind."—Page 234—236.

An Angelical Exercise in Honour of our Blessed Lady.

Whosoever is devoted to this exercise in honour of the blessed Virgin Mary, in reading over every point, may meditate upon it for the space of one *Hail Mary* or more, and by God's grace, he will in a short time find himself greatly increase in love towards that blessed Queen of Heaven; and at the hour of death will, by so pious a mother, be received as her dearest child. Nor can such a one, according to St. Anselm and St. Bernard, possibly perish, but shall find life everlasting, and taste of the joys of eternal bliss*.—Page 275, 276.

* A specimen of this *Angelical Exercise* will be found in Letter VI. It is a kind of dialogue between the Virgin and her worshipper; the language used by the former is often ludicrous, and now and then any thing but delicate. She always illustrates her advice by the example of saints; and in one in-

Of Agnus Dei's.

An *Agnus Dei* (so called from the image of the Lamb of God impressed on the face of it) is made of virgin wax, balsam, and chrism, blessed according to the form prescribed in the Roman ritual. The spiritual efficacy, or virtue of it, is gathered from the prayers that the church makes use of in the blessing of it, which is to preserve him who carries an Agnus Dei, or any particle of it, about him, from any attempts of his spiritual or temporal enemies; from the dangers of fire, of water, of storms and tempests, of thunder and lightning, and from a sudden and unprovided death. It puts the devils to flight, succours women in childbed, takes away the stains of past sins, and furnishes us with new grace for the future, that we may be preserved from all adversities and perils, both in life and death, through the cross and merits of the Lamb, who redeemed and washed us in his blood.

The Pope consecrates the Agnus Dei's the first year of his pontificate, and afterwards every seventh year on Saturday before Low-Sunday, with many solemn ceremonies and devout prayers. *Franc. Cost. Lib.* 4. *Christian Institut. cap.* 12.

stance recommends the caution of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, who "would not even speak alone with his own mother, for fear of the least danger of offence." "I assure you," says the Virgin, on another occasion, "in the sincerity of a mother, that it were better to sleep among serpents, dragons, basilisks, and even the very devils themselves, than to rest one night in mortal sin." Again, "My blessed servant Ignatius gave me one day power over his heart, and I did render it so chaste and strong, that he never after felt any motion of the flesh all his life."

The use of the Agnus Dei is so ancient, that it is now above 960 years since Pope Leo, the third of that name, made a present of one to the emperor Charles the Great, who received it from the hands of his Holiness, as a treasure sent him from heaven, and reverenced it with a singular piety and devotion, as it is recounted in the book intituled, *Registr. Sum. Pontif.* —Page 375—377.

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

00110887

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 16 January, 2016